

# **Modern Substitutes**

**FOR . . .**

# **Traditional Christianity**

**BY**

**EDMUND McCLURE, M.A.**

**Hon. Canon of Bristol**

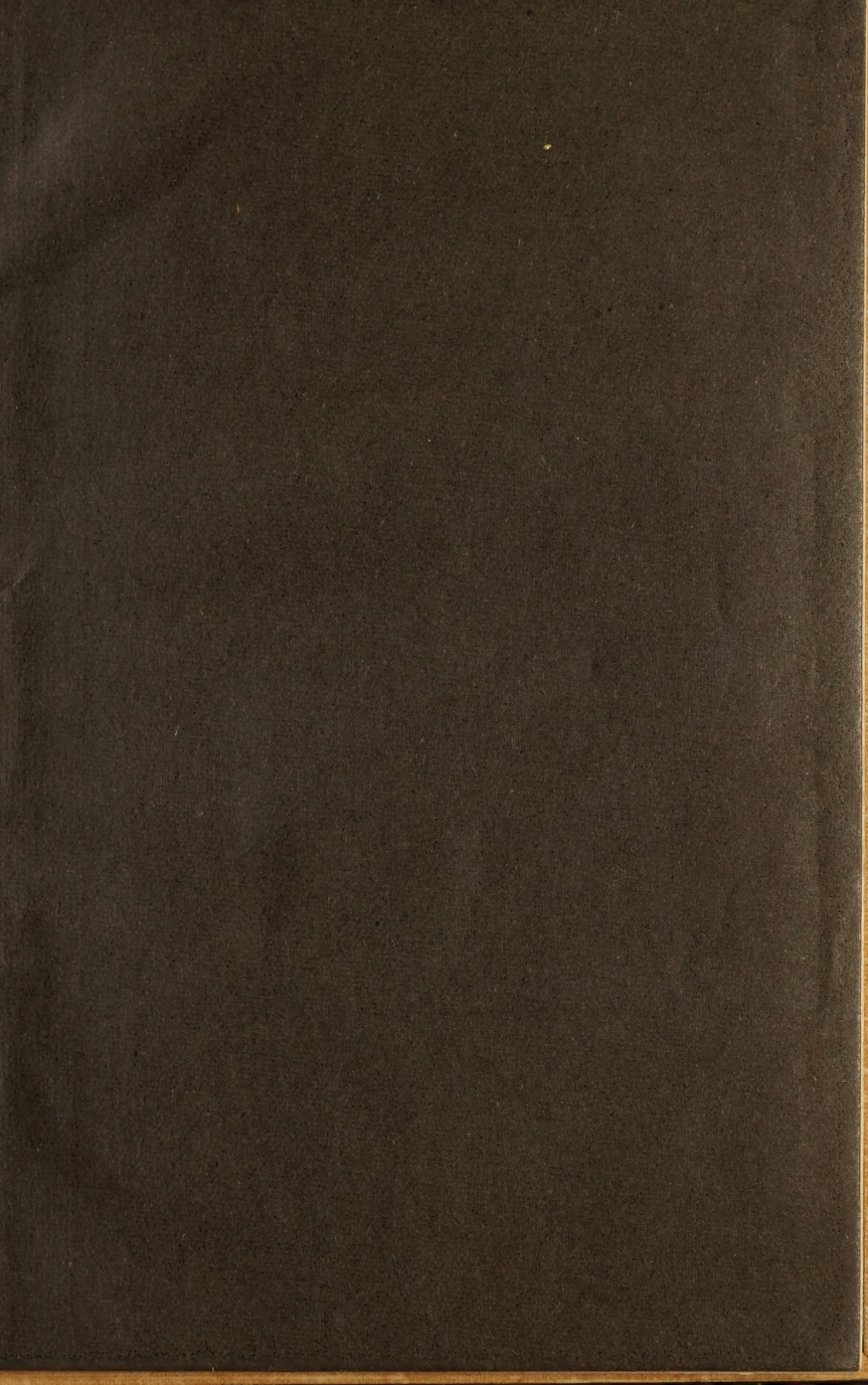
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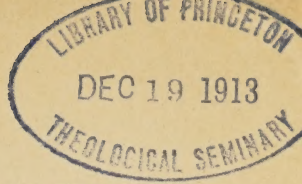
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MODERN SUBSTITUTES  
FOR  
TRADITIONAL CHRISTIANITY

✓ BY  
EDMUND McCLURE, M.A.

HON. CANON OF BRISTOL

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TO THE  
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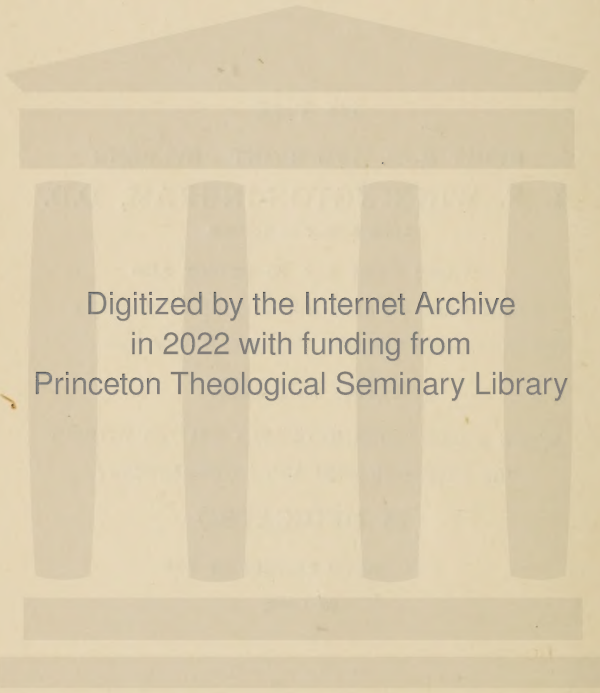
LORD BISHOP OF LONDON

WHOSE KEEN EYE TO DETECT AND  
READY HAND TO EMPLOY MEANS OF FURTHERING  
GOD'S KINGDOM NEVER FAIL HIM

THIS VOLUME  
WHICH WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN WRITTEN WITHOUT  
HIS EXPRESSED WISH AND ENCOURAGEMENT

IS DEDICATED

WITH MUCH RESPECT BY THE  
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## PREFACE

THERE are many modern substitutes for traditional Christianity. The present work is concerned with six of them only. All of these have taken shape within the last few decades. Two of them owe their origin to the United States of America—that country of new ventures in almost every sphere of thought.

It is natural, in a country whose history is a short one, that traditional influences should have an ineffective restraining power. In the absence of the check of a deeply rooted, historical sentiment, the religious emotions are likely to become extravagant, and to pass all legitimate bounds. The careers of individuals like Joseph Smith and Mrs. Eddy would have been impossible in older countries. Other conditions obtaining in the United States contributed largely also to the rise of such personalities and to the spread of their views.

It is not too much to say that personal vanity has a freer play-room and fewer checks in that Republic than among us in England. Natural self-assertion is thus fostered, and abnormal vanity

meets fewer rebuffs. The science of advertising, too, has reached a higher development there than elsewhere, and almost any extravagance can be successfully "boomed." Constant repetition of the same appeals to the public has, as we know, a hypnotising effect. The astute, who aim at material profit, are thus attracted to co-operate in any venture, no matter how foolish, of which it can be said "there is money in it." Such factors as these have conduced largely to the spread of Mormonism, Christian Science, and Theosophy in America.

The four remaining substitutes for traditional Christianity dealt with in the present book, are mainly the outcome of the thought of the age. The laws of thought-evolution are on all fours with those of organic evolution. If "mutations" exist in organic continuity, further investigation will probably render them predictable, and the same may be said of great revolutions in opinion. There is thus continuity throughout. But that continuity is not necessarily "progressive." It is conditioned by the struggle for existence, in which many new types of belief go to the wall. In that struggle the best type will doubtless eventually prevail. A natural optimism at least assumes this. Christianity, although a traditional religion, and therefore more or less fixed, has always shown adaptability to new surroundings. It assimilates throughout the ages every good thing in keeping with its principles, and on this account is



never in antagonism with real progress. It cannot, of course, accommodate itself to views which are subversive of its ideals. Any system, like that of Nietzsche, which reverses Christian standards of value is not only inimical to Christianity, but opposed to the best interests of humanity.

Traditional Christianity is not in conflict with the well-weighed inductions of science. The epoch-making address of Sir Oliver Lodge, President of "The British Association for the Advancement of Science," delivered at the last meeting, shows that the sphere of religion is not outside that of orthodox science. Everything that belongs to the intelligible universe comes, he contends, within the scientific domain.

"The psychic region," as well as the physical, "can be brought under law." "Where inorganic matter alone is concerned," he says, "there everything is determined. Wherever full consciousness has entered, new powers arise, and the faculties and desires of the conscious parts of the scheme have an effect on the whole." The influence of spirit on matter is insisted upon here and elsewhere in the address. The ignoring of this is at the base of the advocacy of a non-miraculous Christianity.

*Oct., 1913.*

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# MODERN SUBSTITUTES FOR TRADITIONAL CHRISTIANITY

## INTRODUCTION

"TWENTY years ago," wrote Professor McDougall in 1911,\* "the scientific world was oppressed by the sense of the finality of its own dicta. The indestructability of matter, the conservation of energy and momentum, the eternal sameness of the chemical atoms, the inevitable extinction of all life on this earth by loss of heat from the solar system, the never-ending alternations of evolution and dissolution of material systems, all these had become 'axioms,' whose rejection was said to be impossible for any sane mind. . . . But now all is changed ; the scientific atmosphere is full of the hope of new insight ; the seeming boundaries of physical knowledge have proved to be spectral creations of the scientific imagination."

This summary of the changed outlook in the past twenty years obtains a striking illustration in the views which are taking shape to-day in regard

\* *Body and Mind*, p. 216.

to the constitution of the universe, and to man's origin and destiny within it.

The recent discovery of radio-active bodies, infinitesimally distributed in the crust of the earth, yet sufficient to maintain its temperature above that which it owes directly to solar radiation: the recognition of the atom as a complex system, containing within it tremendous energies undreamt of before: the new conditions of matter observed at temperatures far below and far above those hitherto obtainable upon this planet of ours—all these have served largely to revolutionise physics, and to extend the scientific horizon almost illimitably. The systematic study of the mental faculties in the new psychology has also led to results which could not have been foreseen a quarter century ago—results which promise to free the human mind from the obsession of a mechanistic slavery.

The mechanistic hypothesis, according to which all human actions are the outcome of purely physical causation, has still, it is true, its upholders. But the reaction against this view is in full operation at the present time.

Science seems, indeed, aghast at the results of its own deliberations in regard to mental functions;—that is, that man is a pure automaton, that free will is a figment, that human consciousness is a mere by-product of the brain and incapable of influencing physical events in the slightest degree, and that all things are determined by the laws of

matter and motion. If science could accommodate itself to this grim outlook, would it not be at the expense of removing any real interest from life?

The reaction is consequently in progress against the submission of human intelligence to such a slavery, against making that intelligence the shadowy outcome of unintelligent matter and forces, and thus robbing it of any significance in the moulding of the world's history. This reaction has made itself evident among recent leaders in scientific investigation as well as among philosophic thinkers generally. Professor McDougall gives a list of eminent scientific men who do not feel compelled, by accepting the theory of the conservation of energy, to believe that the evolution and life-processes of organisms are capable of being completely described in mechanical terms. These include such distinguished men as the late Clerk-Maxwell, the late Sir G. Stokes, and the late Lord Kelvin, besides such living representatives of physical science as Sir Wm. Crookes, Sir O. Lodge, Sir J. J. Thomson, Sir J. Larmor, and Professor Poynting.\*

But it is to religion, which would be impossible in a mechanical world, that the reactionary movement is especially due—to religion which is rooted in human nature and has its driving principle in the realisation of an Intelligence beyond our own and of a sphere of reality outside the domain of physics. Religion in this general sense is at issue

\* *Body and Mind*, p. 253.



with the mechanical concepts of life and thought, and demands for the speculative spirit freedom from the fetters which science had forged for it.

Two remarkable men have taken a prominent part in the reactionary movement of religious philosophy against this mechanical view of life—Rudolf Eucken of Jena, and Professor Bergson of Paris.

Eucken emphasises the transcendence of Spirit, and makes it the active element in life and thought, the Infinite Spirit infusing into the finite continuous activities. Nature, the non-spiritual, instead of being a source of enlightenment is to Eucken something alien and obstructive. Matthew Arnold had somewhat similar views, and regarded Nature as cruel, stubborn, and fickle; and Tennyson saw that she was red in tooth and claw. Wordsworth, on the other hand, embodies in the lines—

“To the solid ground  
Of Nature trusts the mind which builds for aye,”

the view of physical investigators generally. Nature to Eucken is something to be distrusted. To the materialist, Nature is the sum total of external phenomena, fixed, and independent of the observer. To the idealist, it is something that owes its *reality* to the mind alone.

Eucken takes up a middle position. Following his German predecessors, Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, Eucken regards the external world as not presented to consciousness ready made. The moulding of it is the work of mind. Hence we

cannot deduce God, or, indeed, any truth, from the external world alone.

Eucken, while making religion, and especially the Christian religion, the most important consideration for humanity, is opposed to all dogma, and regards uniformity of religious experience as greater than continuity of belief. His views of immortality are hazy, and all definite doctrinal statements he would alter fundamentally. The influence he exercises on contemporary religious thought is owing mainly to the activity he ascribes to Spirit, and it is not a mere accident that the publication in this country of his chief works should synchronise with the revival of non-dogmatic Mysticism, with which Eucken's neo-Christianity or New-Idealism has much in common.

The other great religious philosopher of our day, Professor Bergson, has also contributed much to the revival of Mysticism, but he has at the same time afforded us a fresh outlook in regard to the relations of science and religion. Professor Bergson in his philosophic views follows Plotinus the Neoplatonist in several points, and some account of the latter, for this reason, as well as because Neoplatonism has been exploited by the new Sectarrians, is here needed.

Plotinus, who was not a Christian, although probably conversant with Biblical literature, was born in Egypt about 205 A.D. About twenty-seven years later he attached himself to the Alexandrian school of philosophy. He settled

finally at Rome, where he gave lectures, and where he wrote at length the books which have come down to us. Origen, the great Christian teacher, it may be noted, attended some of his lectures. He lived the life of a recluse, giving himself entirely up to the study of philosophy. Elaborating the conclusions of his master, Plato, he gave to the world a complete system of philosophy, which in all its essential features is represented by the Idealism of our own time. For this reason, and because it deals with the ever-recurring questions concerning man and his destiny, in a form almost as modern as that of Professor Bergson himself, some of the leading points of Plotinus' philosophy are here given.

The world of sense, that world which is made up, according to the man of science, of matter and motion—the only *realities* to him—is to the Neoplatonist only half real and on that account imperfectly knowable. It offers to our senses a multitude of sensations, of sight, sound, taste, etc., which would be meaningless unless the mind had power to classify them and to realise the unity of which they are the varying expressions. It is in the mind they become realities—and the mind realises them because it is akin to the Divine mind in which they exist.

The world of sense is, moreover, in a perpetual flow. "You cannot step twice into the same river." "God alone can say 'I am.'" Before you have taken in the impression of a thing it has changed.



Perpetual mutability is the law of life. Rest belongs only to the dead. Hence the sensible world cannot *in itself* be known.

The sensible world, moreover, presents itself to us as in a condition of ceaseless antagonisms. "War," said Heraclitus, and Hobbes and Nietzsche after him, is the father of all things—"all things are the children of strife." There would be no progress without friction, and yet it is to this antagonism that the disorder we see in the world is due—the moral and physical evil around us—and the recognition of this *disorder* implies that we have an ideal of *order* not furnished by the sensible world. Here again the sensible world cannot be understood *in itself*. We must look, to complete our knowledge of it, to the ideal, to the mind in which that ideal takes shape, and to which the sensible world stands in the relation of a shadow.

The sensible world, again, is presented to us as bound in an iron chain of causality. Everything has a cause, the cause is *outside* it and determines its nature. The will, from this point of view, cannot, therefore, act spontaneously, it is not free, but determined by antecedent causes.

From these considerations the Neoplatonist regarded the world as only half real—a world of *becoming*, not of *being*—apprehended by opinion, not by true knowledge. The world, says Plotinus, is like a mirror in which a man sees the shadows of realities. "Only," he adds, "you see the mirror and you do not see matter." But "matter" to

Plotinus was not the matter of the modern physicist, measured by mass. It was nothing but the "shapeless": that which was as nothing apart from the "form" given to it. Matter to Plotinus is immaterial, and approximates to the modern physicists' concept of the æther of space. The "form" succeeded only partially at times in suffusing this "matter" with its light. It offered to "form" a certain power of resistance, such as Professor Bergson ascribes to matter, when acted upon by his creative force. It was to the Neoplatonist the cause of evil—limiting God both physically and morally, hence the anxiety of Plotinus to ascribe to it what is a merely hypothetical existence.

All sensible existence, according to Plotinus, was an aggregate of matter and qualities, and the qualities of an object, which produce in us a complex group of sensations, arise from the energies of the Logos.

The Logos \* (or Word) of St. John's Gospel was probably borrowed from the Alexandrians. It answers to the "creative intelligence" of Plotinus, and, in essential features, to the creative force behind life in Bergson's philosophy. It approaches nearly to what is looked upon by science as physical law, but this law is regarded by the Neoplatonist as a *living* force proceeding from, and inseparably connected with, a thought in the

\* Logos might perhaps be better translated as "speech," that is, a description or reasonable definition.

Divine mind. The Logos is often called by the Neoplatonists *spermatic*, because, like the seed (*sperma*), it carries implicitly all the qualities of the mature organism, and is thus equivalent to the agency to which Bergson ascribes his creative evolution. Thus, when the Logos proceeds from the Divine mind and comes in contact with matter, "it makes a thing." Nothing can be made without it, or, in Christian language, according to St. John, "without Him (that is the Logos) was not anything made that was made."

Thus we come to the conclusion at which Plotinus arrived: The world is nothing else than the thought of God transmuted into vital law—what we realise therein are the traces, shadows, of intelligence. Or to express it in a modern way, there is no object without a subject, no *thing* without a thinker. Nothing can exist, nothing be known, except in so far as it is made, arranged, brought into definite relation with other things by an Ordering Reason.

It will render the position of the Neoplatonists easier of comprehension if we bear in mind that to him existence is thought: every object is *in* the sphere of mind: a universe *outside* thought is unthinkable. The widest sphere of the astronomer as well as the microcosm of the atom, with its contents of revolving electrons, is *in* the human mind, and is comprehensible by that mind because both thinker and thought are derived from the Supreme Intelligence.



Plotinus anticipated, moreover, some modern theories about the soul, which he regarded as coming down to occupy the body prepared for it. He rejects the Stoic view, shared in by some moderns, that mind is a product of matter in a process of evolution. The placing of the soul in a body was, according to the Neoplatonist, in the nature of a chastisement, and this view of the penal character of earthly existence was worked out by the addition of the fanciful doctrine of the transmigration of souls even into the bodies of brutes.

Plotinus anticipated also the earlier views of the late Professor William James, and seemingly the doctrine of Professor Bergson also, according to whom the soul is not *in* the body: the Neoplatonist asserting, on the contrary, that the body is *in* the soul as "a net in the sea," pervaded yet transcended. The soul is never separated from the First cause, although the union may be dormant. We *possess* only what we *use*, and the realisation of that union depends on our receptivity. It is by having this receptivity that we attain to higher and higher conceptions of our union with the Divine. This is that which was called later "the mystic way" culminating in the beatific vision. Porphyry records of Plotinus that he attained to this beatific vision on four occasions, while Porphyry himself had this grace vouchsafed to him only once.

It will be seen from this slight sketch\* that

\* For an elaborate exposition of the philosophy of Plotinus see

Neoplatonism has a bearing on many points discussed later on, and anticipates much in modern thought that is commonly regarded as new.

Professor Bergson has written a good deal on the philosophy of Plotinus, and is evidently much influenced by it. In his *Creative Evolution* he insists on a creative will (the equivalent of the creative intelligence of Plotinus) behind development, thus revolutionising our views of the evolutionary theory, and at the same time placing the mind outside the chain of material causation. This freeing of the mind from the fetters forged for it by the evolutionary theory is of the first importance. "For if naturalism be accepted," as Mr. Balfour says, "then our whole apparatus for arriving at truth, all the beliefs in which that truth is embodied, reason, instinct, and their legitimate results are the product of irrational forces. Whence, then, their authority? By introducing creative will behind development, Bergson has profoundly modified the whole evolutionary drama." \*

Professor Bergson's philosophy is, as has been already pointed out, a reaction from the mechanical concept of the universe. It removes the oppressive weight of lifeless mechanism, by introducing into the cosmic process a creative living force. This creative force, according to Bergson, is the chief factor in organic evolution; it finds

*Neoplatonism*, by the late Professor C. Bigg, D.D., a work to which I am largely indebted in the sketch given above.

\* *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1911.

its highest expression in mind. What we call mind is before all something conscious, and consciousness signifies above all memory. Consciousness apart from memory would be momentary—a consciousness that died and was born every instant.

All consciousness, Bergson says, is therefore memory—a presentation and accumulation of the past *in* the present. In all consciousness, moreover, there is an anticipation of the future. In listening to a speech, for instance, we are always intent on what is coming. The *present* moment is something, therefore, which hardly exists except in theory. What we call our present has amplitude in duration. Consciousness is, as it were, a hyphen between past and present.

The brain, he continues, is associated with consciousness; but there are organisms which have no brain or nervous systems, such as the amœba. The amœba throws out feelers to catch its food floating by, indicating a certain intention or choice. Therefore, says Bergson, choice exists in the whole scale of being in response to stimulation from without. The faculty of spontaneous motion probably exists, he continues, in every living thing, and consciousness is in principle present in all living matter; but it is dormant where spontaneous activity is renounced, and more intense where living matter trends in the direction of movement. Our experience shows that precisely as our actions cease to be spontaneous and become automatic, consciousness withdraws from them, as in the playing of a skilful

pianist the touching of the keys becomes automatic and unconscious. Consciousness, on the other hand, is most acute when we are hesitating between several possible actions. Consciousness, therefore, expresses the amount of choice—or creation—at our disposal for movement and activity.

The introduction of life into the world, Bergson adds, is like the introduction of something which encroaches on inert matter.\* Inert matter reacts in a *determined* way. With the coming of life we see arise the appearance of indetermination, unforeseeability, choice. Consciousness and matter are antagonistic forces, but which come to an understanding. Matter constitutes the realm of fatalism, consciousness essentially that of freedom.

Professor Bergson believes—contrary to all upholders of the mechanistic theory—that consciousness exerts an influence on matter, and that, too, seemingly without a breach in the theory of the conservation of energy. That is, it neither adds to, nor takes away from, the sum total of energy in the universe.

Consciousness, moreover, when confronted with matter, seizes in an instant under an *indivisible* form millions and millions of events succeeding each other in inert matter. For example, the indivisible sensation of light arises from billions of successive vibrations, all seized *at once*.

\* "Life," says Sir O. Lodge, "may be called a catalytic agent," *i.e.* acting on matter without contributing energy to it,



Sensation, which is at the point where consciousness touches matter, is the condensation of a history, which in itself—that is, in the world of matter—is something infinitely diluted, occupying enormous periods in what we may call the duration of things.

On the one hand, we have matter subject to necessity—an immense machine without memory ; on the other, consciousness, a force essentially free and essentially memory, whose function is to pile up past upon past, and to organise with this past something *new*, a real creation.

Matter and consciousness may, it is true, have had a common origin, and neither matter nor consciousness can be explained in itself. “I see,” says Professor Bergson, “in the whole evolution of life on our planet an effort of this essentially creative force (consciousness) to arrive, by traversing matter, at something which is realised in man, and then only imperfectly.”

This force has evidently met resistance in the matter it had to use ; it has been obliged to split up—to share along different lines of evolution—the different tendencies it carried, producing a crowd of failures in the forms of life produced. Two alone seem to have led to a certain success—Arthropods and Vertebrates. At the end of the first stands instinct, in its most marvellous form (bees, ants) ; at the end of the second, human intellect. This force seems to have contained potentially the two forms of consciousness, instinct

and intelligence. Matter all the while is striving to draw consciousness to its own automatism, and succeeds in doing so in the case of the vegetable kingdom. In this struggle liberty is dogged by automatism. The human brain breaks the chain, because it has the remarkable feature that it can oppose to every contracted habit another habit—to automatism another automatism. Thus man becomes free by setting necessity against necessity.

“The evolution of life,” says Professor Bergson, “will never, I think, be explained by mechanical forces; there *is* a vital impulse—something seeking to transcend itself, and drawing from itself more than it contains—therefore a *spiritual* force.”

As consciousness is also memory, one of its functions is to accumulate and preserve the facts; the brain, therefore, is very probably an instrument of forgetfulness as well as of remembrance, and in pure consciousness nothing of the past is probably lost; the whole of a conscious personality being an *indivisible* continuity, and in this passage of consciousness through matter consciousness is tempered, and tests itself by constituting personalities and preparing them for a higher form of existence. This satisfies instinct, which is, as Professor Bergson says, nearer life than intellect and science.\* In his two Oxford lectures Bergson expands still further his views on intuition or instinct. “If our faculties of perception, external

\* Professor Bergson’s “Life and Consciousness,” *Hibbert Journal* October, 1911.

and internal, were indefinitely extended, we should never have recourse to the faculties of conceiving and reasoning ; we need to make up for the narrow range of perception by the process of generalising : a perfect being would know all things intuitively." Elsewhere he shows that reasoning refers in the struggle for existence to purely material things, and that it is as yet ill adapted to grapple with the subject of man's higher outlook. Instinct supplies the deficiency and brings us into the directest relation with what is most real in the universe.

In his lecture before the Psychical Research Society on May 28, 1913, Professor Bergson gives some further information as to his view of the relation of brain and mind. "If one could see," he said, "all that takes place in the interior of the brain, one would find that that which takes place there corresponds to a small part only of the life of the mind. The brain simply extracts from the life of the mind that which is capable of representation in *movement*. The cerebral life is to the mental life what the movements of the baton of a conductor are to the symphony."

The reaction from the mechanical concept of the universe has naturally tended in the direction of religion, for which, as we have said, a world given up entirely to physical causation has no scope. The fresh outlook furnished by such thinkers as Eucken and Bergson has inspired

a reconstruction of religious ideals—some of them on novel lines. The removal of the leaden pressure of the mechanical view has released instincts—universal in time and space—which can be satisfied only by a recognition of a Supreme Being and of intimate human relations with Him. But in the reaction the flood of religious emotion has, in many instances, overpassed all legitimate bounds. The old paths no longer satisfy the freshly awakened instincts of the explorer after high ideals. He wants to try short cuts, and is ready to accept the lead of any adventurous system which will take him out of the beaten track. He wants relief, moreover, from the harassings of intellectual criticism. He looks for an authority, not based on documents and history, but appealing to him direct. Hence the recent outbreaks in the direction of undogmatic Mysticism, with its immediate relations to the Divine, Christian science, with its spiritual perception, Theosophy, with its transcendant occultism, and other modern substitutes for Christianity.

There are still in existence, moreover, some legatees of the mechanical view of the world. These are not prepared to give up altogether the pursuit of religious ideals, and in their efforts to accommodate their religion and their science, are ready to surrender all that rationalism seems to demand. Hence the rise of the belief in the possibility of a non-miraculous Christianity.

There are, again, those, like Nietzsche, who



would make a clean sweep of all religion and all that they regard as conventional ethics, substituting in their place a Secularism which finds its Garden of Eden, its Paradise in the future of the present world, and its guide in morals in the evolutionary process.

The following pages will be taken up with the discussion of such modern substitutes for traditional Christianity.

## NON-MIRACULOUS CHRISTIANITY

THE Rev. J. M. Thompson may be taken as the representative of those who hold that Christianity will still maintain its position in the world, and that, too, the more effectually, if it plainly relinquishes all belief in miracles. Mr. Thompson's treatment of his subject, while frank, is very reverent, and he expresses his belief in Christ in words of much fervour. He denies that the recorded miracles have any organic connection with the Gospel, and expresses himself with some freedom in regard to our Lord, whose Divinity in a certain sense he accepts, as follows.

"Though no miracles accompanied His entry into, or presence in, or departure from, the world ; though He did not think, or speak, or act otherwise than as a man ; though He yields nothing to historical analysis but human elements : yet in Jesus Christ God is incarnate, discovered, and worshipped as God alone can be, by the insight of faith." \*

He is not, therefore, prepared to deny the supernatural altogether. He thinks that science and supernaturalism can survive side by side, but only on the condition that the belief in miracles is rejected. The supernatural with him belongs to the spiritual realm, and no external

\* *The New Testament*, the Rev. J. M. Thompson, London, 1911.

signs of it are to be looked for. Mr. Thompson explains away the miracles recorded in the New Testament. Some are instances of faith-healing, or of "suggestion" in cases of abnormal psychology; others are misrepresentations of natural events—forced applications of Old Testament prophecies, etc.

It is clear that his criticisms on the evidence as to the miracles of the Gospel are led up to by his firm conviction that miracles from the scientific point of view are impossible. It is with this question, therefore, that we have to deal. The disbelief in miracles is not confined to modern philosophers.

In *All's Well that Ends Well*, Act ii. scene iii., expression is given to a view current in Shakespeare's time.

*Lafau.* "They say, miracles are past; and we have our philosophical persons, to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and causeless. Hence is it, that we make trifles of terrors; ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge, when we should submit ourselves to an unknown fear."

Such "philosophical persons" will always be forthcoming, for they will find a public more or less prepared for them. It is no easy matter to believe in miracles. Common everyday experience is against them. The Indian prince, who dismissed as unworthy of credence his informant testifying he had seen solid water, has his representative everywhere. The unfamiliar will always be on its trial, and requires strong evidence to substantiate it.

Hume was quite right in saying that evidence was more likely to be mistaken than that there should be a break in the invariable course of nature. But belief in an invariable course of nature must also rest on evidence, and it comes at length to the reckoning of the relative values of evidence. The first appearance of a comet to the world must have seemed a miracle, in the sense of its transcending all previous experience, and the testimony of its existence to those who had not seen it must have been received with natural distrust.

But there is a stronger argument against miracles than that used by Hume. He did not recognise in the world what is called *causality*. The sequence of events to him was purely chronological. The invariable antecedent he did not regard as the cause of the consequent. Day is not the *cause* of night, although it invariably precedes it.

We live in an age in which belief in mechanical causation is at the base of all exact knowledge, that is, of all science. More than a hundred years ago it was imagined by philosophers that the world could be explained on mechanical principles alone. Laplace even conceived a physicist competent to foretell the progress of nature for all eternity, if only the masses of matter, their position and their initial velocity were given. But there is now a still more stable base for prediction than the universality of gravitation. Within our own time the great principle of the conservation of energy has taken form as an undisputed acquisition of science.



And this is how this principle affects our outlook on the world : "All real process consists in the movement of masses ; all motion is caused by motion only, and all change of motion of any body is caused by impact of some other body upon it." And again, "All physical energy becomes kinetic energy, or the momentum of masses, and the law of the conservation of energy asserts that the kinetic energy of the universe is a constant quantity."

This means that every form of physical activity that comes under our notice is an instance of motion caused by other motion only, and the sum total of the energy causing all motion is constant ; it cannot be added to or diminished. Every motion taking place in the universe comes under this law. There is seemingly no room for a miracle here. For if any *spiritual* influence, it is contended, were supposed to change the rate of motion of the least particle of matter, it must increase or diminish the existing quantity of kinetic energy in the universe, and would be thus a contravention of this law. And it is not too much to say, this law of the conservation of energy is an essential article in the creed of every man of science.

Is it to be wondered at that Mr. Thompson and those who agree with him should strive to preserve their belief in Christ by rejecting everything in the New Testament seeming to contravene this law ?

Is there no way of recognising interference in the course of nature without assuming a breach of this law ?

The late Clerk-Maxwell showed the possibility of such interference, and Sir Oliver Lodge has also made it clear that a directive guidance could be imposed on nature without breaking this law, that is, without adding to or diminishing the quantity of energy in the universe. And this directive influence might be of the nature of spirit, that is, of human thought, which no scientific man has ever regarded as material, however much it may be associated with material processes. Here we come to the kernel of the matter.

Does the law of the conservation of energy really cover every form of activity in the universe—reducing such activity to physical movements which may be measured?

Is human thought within its compass, and human will. They cannot be weighed or measured. Are they not factors in the great drama of mundane affairs? The upholder of the mechanical concept of the universe consistently denies that Consciousness in any of its forms can influence in the slightest degree the course of physical events. Consciousness, while an attendant phenomenon on certain brain processes, has, it is contended, no more efficiency in the world of matter than the shadows of a revolving wheel have upon the motion of the latter. It is in cerebral changes only—to which consciousness is merely a kind of by-product—that efficiency lies. It has been proved that the cerebral cortex—the thin surface-layer of grey matter—is the part of the brain immediately

concerned with certain mental processes. This cortex has been mapped out into areas, the integrity of which is essential to certain modes of consciousness, including the highest actions of thought. This and other parts of the brain, together with the spinal cord, are the seat of all nervous processes—and these processes, it is contended, are all of the nature of reflex action under varying physical stimuli. Consciousness, including the Will, has no influence, can have no influence, on these processes, and is therefore excluded from any effect on the world around us. The strong natural conviction that we can, by thought and will, exercise a control on our bodies, and, through them, on the external world is regarded as fundamentally mistaken. A somewhat ludicrous illustration will show what the upholders of this view mean.

A man sees a bear, becomes afraid, and runs away. In this sequence of events the intermediate factor between the sight of the bear and the running away is *fear*. And this is a form of consciousness. Ordinary people would have no hesitation in saying that this form of consciousness exercises a power through nerves on the muscles of the legs, and *causes* the man to run away. Such a view is in direct contradiction with the assumption that consciousness has no control over the body. But then this is not the way in which the strict materialist regards the incident. To him the physical sequence is this: the man sees the bear, runs away before consciousness comes into play,

and then is afraid *because* he is running away. That is, running away is the reflex action following the stimulus of the sight of the bear, and would take place if no consciousness whatever accompanied the incident. It sounds like something from *Alice Through the Looking Glass*. The Queen, it will be remembered, screamed *before* she pricked her finger. The case, however, is not so absurd as it looks. Many reflex actions are unattended by consciousness, and in such cases consciousness cannot be a factor in the action. There are also instances of reflex action attended by consciousness in which consciousness plays no effective part. The assumption that reflex action covers every form of human activity is only an extension of the application of a principle, known to be effective in certain cases, to all instances.

And the result of all this—what is it? All human actions are the actions of automata. There is no freedom anywhere. An iron chain of physical causation links act with act. The phantasmagoria of human consciousness all down the ages is nothing but a futile shadow. The world could have gone on as it has done without consciousness at all. All the great thoughts of men, all systems of philosophy, all the wisdom of the world enshrined in books, all human conceptions which have led, according to common belief, to the great engineering triumphs of the world, are but needless transcripts, as far as the processes of physical nature are concerned, of reflex materialistic action.



Is it any wonder that scientific men, who have been led to this by what seems irresistible logic, should stand aghast at the result? Is it any wonder that human nature should rebel against such a slavery as this, and that the mind should endeavour to find freedom somewhere? There must surely be an error in the reasoning that leads to this dire result? The reaction was bound to come, and it has come. It has come, as has been shown in the Introduction, by making spirit an efficient agent in human evolution. Materialists do not disparage consciousness; they are ready to regard it as a profitable field of study *in itself*: placing at the same time an impassable wall between it and the world of matter and motion. Let each region be investigated by itself, they would say, but on the understanding that a closed door is between them.

That door has now begun to open. Professor Bergson, in shifting all objects of knowledge and the relations between them—that is, the so-called categories—from a dead externality into the living and inward, shows thus that these objects are not things independent of the thinking subject. His creative consciousness can, as we have seen, work upon that object of thought called matter, and mould matter. The mode is not that of one moving mass acting upon another; a directive influence can, as we have seen, come into play without involving a breach in the law of the conservation of energy. Clerk-Maxwell's and Sir Oliver Lodge's view of how that directive influence

works may meet the case, but Professor Bergson insists, and brings strong proof of his contention, that life and consciousness are creative, and that the object of thought, "matter," \* is controlled by them. This subject has been already dealt with in the Introduction, and it is only necessary here to show how the efficiency of spirit in the world bears upon belief in the possibility of miracles.

God, the Supreme Spirit, is miracle—the supremacy of spirit over the material. The immanence of the Supreme Intelligence in the universe is that which makes nature intelligible to us. Intelligence answers to intelligence through the vehicles of phenomena. On this assumption Spirit underlies all matter and all material forces. The generalisations we call Laws of Nature are the expression, as far as we can understand them, not of the spontaneous activities of matter and energy, but of the Living Intelligence at the base of things. Spirit *comes first*, and while it is immanent in nature it transcends it. What Bergson says of human life and consciousness: that they are creative—continuously creative, moulding antagonistic matter so as to ensure their fuller development, may be applied, with reverence and setting aside human limitations, to the Creative Intelligence upon which the universe depends for its maintenance and growth.

\* "Mass and shape, as a function of velocity, are an immediate consequence of the electrical theory of matter." Sir O. Lodge, Birmingham address.

The universe is not, therefore, like a watch wound up to go for an indefinite period, and left to itself, as the Deists and materialists believe it to be. It is in a continual process of *becoming*; and although, owing to the workings of the Intelligence immanent in it, we may be able to forecast its operations for a long way ahead, yet it is never for an instant the same. There is continuous growth, not blind evolution, but growth with an intelligent purpose. Human growth is based on the adaptation of means to ends, and on the seizure of opportunities for development. Is it other than a reflection of cosmic evolution? Miracles from this point of view are—like the mutations, or the “Sports,” of modern Darwinism—sudden new departures in what was previously continuous progress, and Spirit is behind them. If sudden mutations in species are possible in nature then a miracle is on a line with them, and continuity is broken only to secure fresh development.

The miracles of the Gospels are not idle wonders; they are associated with a Personality Who is a tremendous Mutation, a New Departure in human history, and they are associated with the expression of that Personality. His appearance on the stage of the world is not that of one who had been led up to, and conditioned by, his immediate environment. All kinds of contradictory theories have been propounded to account for that Personality on purely naturalistic grounds, but Christ still remains unique among men. Such a character

as His, gauged by ordinary standards, appears so impossible that some men, like Professor Drews of Karlsruhe,\* deny the historical existence of our Lord, and base Christianity on a myth. The Gospels themselves have been criticised, as by Mr. Thompson, with the view of rendering that Personality, from an external point of view, more acceptable to rational minds, but the narratives in the Sacred Records are so intimately bound up with the Christ of the Creeds that both survive or fall together.

The subject of miracles was discussed at the Church Congress of 1912, and the speakers chosen were men eminently fitted to deal with the question.

Dr. Strong, the Dean of Christ Church, began the discussion by asking if miracles were rationally possible. He did not regard a miracle as an event out of all relation to law. What laws, he asked, do miracles run up against? The laws of matter and motion? But these laws are abstractions, convenient formulas, and not a final account of absolute truths. The mechanical theory, he added, cannot explain consciousness, and is obliged to deny its effect on body. It fails, too, to account alone for the origin of life.†

\* *Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus*, by Professor Arthur Drews, translated by Joseph M'Cabe.

† At the meeting of the British Association in 1912, the President, Professor Schäfer, expressed his opinion that the chasm between inorganic and organic nature would one day be bridged. In the *Times* report of the meeting of the International Congress of



History, as Professor Meyer writes (*Kleine Schriften*), depends on will which cannot be expressed in terms of matter and motion. Such objections, Dr. Strong concluded, point to a view in which spirit is a factor. If we accept this, the main difficulty disappears. We have to settle first, therefore, whether we are going to look at the world from the mechanical or spiritual point of view.

Professor Sanday deals with the subject from the standpoint of the historian. What is the historic evidence for the Gospel miracles? Miracles are recorded in all four Gospels, and are relatively most numerous in St. Mark. The Gospel of St. Mark had assumed its present form, according to Dr. Sanday, in the decade 60-70 A.D. "Q,"\* which is somewhat earlier than St. Mark, and may have been written within fifteen or twenty years of the Crucifixion, contains one definite miracle at least (the healing of the Centurion's servant), and some pointed allusions to others ("Go your way, and tell John"; and, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin"). Some portions of the special source of St. Luke are perhaps still earlier.

These sources give a consistent picture of our

Medicine on August 10, 1913, there is found the following statement: "It might safely be said that with one single exception the 8000 medical men gathered at the Congress all recognised the insoluble problem lying behind the origin of life."

\* "Q" is the initial letter of the German "Quelle," source, and represents roughly the elements common to St. Matthew and St. Luke, and not appearing in St. Mark.

Lord and His ministry. This picture was not evolved later, as some critics would like to establish. The Gospel miracles rest, therefore, on sound historical foundations. Our Lord "not only lived in a supernatural atmosphere, but was Himself the Creative Centre of that atmosphere. His Person was supernatural and virtue went out from Him." "By supernatural," Dr. Sanday adds, "I mean that there is conclusive evidence of the presence of a 'Higher Cause' in the world."

Rev. A. C. Headlam distinguishes the three Greek terms \* which are usually rendered by "miracles," or an equivalent expression, in the New Testament.

St. Paul, referring to things wrought by Christ, but not through the Apostle himself, speaks of them as done "in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit of God" (Rom. xv. 19). This shows that miracles were ascribed to a great spiritual force. And this force when put into operation is subordinate to spiritual teaching. The spiritual gift comes first—"Thy sins are forgiven thee."

It is impossible, Dr. Headlam says, to separate the evidence for the miracles from the evidence for the rest of our Lord's life. A miracle means really a supremacy of the spiritual force of the world over the material. Can we say, he asks, that there was nothing abnormal in the beginning of

\* τέρατα (wonders), σημεῖα (signs), δυνάμεις (powers).

Christianity? Our Lord's miracles are consistent with His life, and His life with His miracles.

This discussion brings out these points: that disbelief in miracles must arise from something else than deficiency of historical testimony; that is, from the view that miracles run up against the laws of matter and motion, and that these laws are a final account of absolute truth; or from the assumption that spiritual energy is a negligible quantity in the operations of nature; or, lastly, from the idea that our Lord's personality and the marvellous spread of the religion which He founded imply the employment of no other than purely human means.

The chief difficulty is that arising from the seeming irreconcilability of miracle and physical law. With regard to this, the words of the present president of the British Association, Sir Oliver Lodge, may find here an appropriate place.

"The special changes," he says,\* "produced in matter by will and intelligence are explicable by a process of 'timing'—a process adapted to the directing of energy—quite independent of any alteration in its amount, without any interference with—indeed, with full assistance from, the laws of physics." "There is," he adds, "plenty of room for guidance amid the laws of physics. . . . Supervision and assistance may be realities, and yet the struggle may be a real one. We are still

\* *Hibbert Journal*, January, 1912.

far more dependent on intuition than on reason. He is impressed," he says, "with two things: first, with the reality and activity of powerful, but not almighty, helpers to whom we owe guidance, management, and reasonable control; and next, with the fearful majesty of still higher aspects of the universe, infinitely beyond our utmost possibility of thought."

In his Address as President of the British Association on Sept. 10, 1913, Sir Oliver Lodge went still further in his contention for a wider outlook than that of the materialist.

Dealing with "the modern tendency to emphasise the discontinuous or atomic character of everything," he said, "I myself am an upholder of *ultimate* Continuity, and a fervent believer in the æther of space." "Matter," he says, "moves through the æther with perfect freedom . . . and the constitution of matter is such that there appears to be no displacement in the ordinary sense at all. The æther itself is so modified as to *constitute* the matter in some way." "The æther is the universal connecting medium which binds the universe together and makes it a coherent whole instead of a chaotic collection of independent isolated fragments. It is the vehicle of transmission of all forms of force." "It is not matter," and if it cannot be made evident to our senses, "it is the extreme omnipresence and uniformity and universal agency of the æther of space that makes it so difficult to observe." "If everything in the universe had the *same* temperature . . . nothing would be visible at all." With regard to the possible functions of the æther in the spiritual sphere, he says, he has been convinced "that memory and affection are not limited to that association with matter by which alone they can manifest themselves here and now, and personality persists beyond bodily death." "Discarnate intelligence under certain conditions, may interact with us on the material side, thus indirectly coming within our scientific ken; and gradually we may hope to attain some understanding of the nature of a larger, perhaps, æthereal existence."

“To explain the psychical in terms of the physical is impossible.” “How life exerts guidance over chemical and physical forces” is puzzling, but the fact “admits of no doubt.” “The universe is a larger thing than we have any conception of, and no one method of search will exhaust its treasures.”

Mr. Thompson is thoroughly honest in his endeavour to make Christianity more easily acceptable to rational minds by removing from it all that seems to conflict with physical laws. He would preserve, it is true, the “supernatural,” but it is a supernatural without any external testimony. Something which responds to, and can be reached only by, inward faith. It is not, therefore, the supernatural with which the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation are saturated. But would Christianity without the miraculous ever have become acceptable to human souls pining for something transcending the matter-of-fact world of mechanical law, something that would indicate Divine intervention and guidance in the affairs of men? Is not religion itself the expression of the belief that God is continually intervening in human affairs, and that by raising our hearts to Him in prayer we call into operation unseen forces that modify even the course of physical things. Pervasively in time and space the human mind has sought such contact with the unseen. Must this universal intuition of humanity give way to a view that would shut out all spiritual interference from a world assumed to be given up to iron-bound mechanical causation?



Mr. Thompson and his followers would limit the vision of the human mind to a field that is more that of a philosophy than of a religion. Limitation of mental vision, this is, according to Professor Bergson, the function proper of the human brain. "One of the rôles of the brain," he says,\* "is to limit the vision of the mind so as to render its action more efficacious." That is, mind overflows brain—has a province beyond it—and the brain has been developing in the ages by bringing mind to bear upon the problems of daily material existence, and by this action has made it purblind to higher concerns. To set up a Christianity without miracles is to act as the brain does with mind—to limit its scope by material considerations. But has not the mind a province beyond these considerations: is it not in touch with a cosmic spirit, a higher intelligence, pulsating with a life that is not of this world.

The question asked by S. T. Coleridge in an early poem is more germane to the present attitude of philosophic thought than that raised and answered by Mr. Thompson:—

"And what if all animate nature,  
Be but organic harps, diversely framed:  
That tremble into thought as o'er them sweeps,  
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,  
At once the soul of each, and God of all?"

\* Address May 29, 1913, to *Psychological Research Society*.

## MYSTICISM DIVORCED FROM DOGMA

THE recent revival in England of an interest in Mysticism is to be traced in a measure probably to the influence of the publication of the works of Rudolf Eucken. Dr. Inge, the Dean of St. Paul's, was among the first to draw attention to this celebrated German philosopher ; and he was the first also in this country to give in recent years an historic account—admirable for its wide scope and its searching analysis—of Christian Mysticism.\*

Since the publication of the Dean's *Christian Mysticism* in 1899, quite a flood of literature on the subject has been poured forth from the English press. It is evident from the interest with which these publications have been received that Mysticism has fallen in, to a considerable extent, with the religious aspirations of the hour. One can think of some reasons why Mysticism should find a ready reception at the present time.

It offers, divorced from dogma, seemingly an accessible refuge from the perturbing influences of materialism.

It furnishes a promising haven of rest to those who have been tossing on the stormy sea of religious controversy.

\* *Bampton Lectures*, 1899.

Those who are weary of the strife of tongues,—those who feel the solid ground of revelation rembling beneath their feet from the volcanic upheaval of Bible Criticism,—those who experience it more difficult everyday to reconcile Christian dogma with the modern outlook, find naturally in undogmatic Mysticism a field, protected from all external assault, for the exercise of the religious instincts.

What is the nature, we may well ask, of the boon which, at this opportune hour, is presented as a solace to the distracted religious mind?

Mysticism has a long history. The name carries us back to the Greek mysteries. It comes from a Greek word meaning "to shut the eyes," from which was formed a noun designating one who had been initiated into the "sacred mysteries."

The term "mystic" came eventually to have a larger meaning, and at the rise of Neoplatonism in the third century A.D., Mysticism assumed a place, as has been already said, in that philosophy. It was the age of the general disruption of pagan religious beliefs, and in the despairing outlook a longing arose for Divine illumination. Plotinus, as we have seen, endeavoured to meet this want.

It was not until the end of the fifth century A.D., however, that Neoplatonism found a definite lodgment in Christian thought. This was effected through the agency of St. Dionysius, the so-called Areopagite. He developed a system of Esoteric

Christianity which became the source of all later developments of Christian Mysticism.

The influence of the teaching of Dionysius, who wrote in Greek, was not felt in the West until the ninth century, when an Irish ecclesiastic, John Erigena, translated Dionysius, together with the commentaries of one of his followers, into Latin. The mysticism of Dionysius then began to spread. It had not at this time separated itself in any way from the dogmatic teaching of the Church.

An antagonism arose, however, between it and the subsequent development of Scholasticism in the Mediæval Church. Scholasticism endeavoured to show that the teaching of revelation and that of reason are identical. The *externality* of religious truth to the mind was fundamental with the Schoolmen. The opposite view was fundamental with Mysticism. The antagonism between them was that of the letter to the spirit—the opposition of rationalising dialectic to practical religion—to personal religious experience. St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) is the champion of Mysticism against the rationalistic distinctions and reasonings of Abelard the Scholastic, whom St. Bernard condemns for externalising and degrading the faith. St. Bernard in his *De Dili-gendo Deo* makes love of God the mainspring of spiritual progress; but the cause of loving God is God Himself, and the measure of loving Him is to love Him without measure. The fruit of this love

is the ecstatic vision, anticipating the unchanging and eternal life of the soul in the Hereafter.

From St. Bernard onward there is a continuous line of great mystic teachers. Hugh of St. Victor—an Augustinian Abbey near Paris—wrote, among other mystic works, an elaborate commentary on John Erigena's version of the *Celestial Hierarchy* of St. Dionysius. The office of the Hierarchy of Angels, according to St. Dionysius is to receive, and to communicate to the religious soul the divine light in a threefold way, that is, as purifying, illuminating, and rendering perfect by unifying with God.

St. Bernard explains as follows the function of the Nine Angelic Orders. I adopt Mr. E. G. Gardner's translation.\*

"What then," he asks, "is meant by this distinction into grades? We think those are called *Angels* who are believed to be assigned singularly to individual men as guardians: *sent to minister*, according to the teaching of St. Paul, *for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation* (Heb. i. 14); of whom our Saviour said: *Their Angels always behold the Face of My Father* (St. Matt. xviii. 10). Set over these we think are the *Archangels*, who, conscious of divine mysteries, are only sent for very great and special causes. From these that great Archangel Gabriel was chosen to be sent to Mary, for a cause than which there could not be a greater. Above these we think are the *Virtues*,

\* *Dante and the Mystics*, pp. 128-131.



by whose command or work signs and prodigies are wrought among the elements, for the admonition of mortals. Therefore, perchance it is, when thou readest in the Gospels: *There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars*; thou hast a little after; *For the Virtues* (powers) *of the heavens shall be moved* (St. Luke xxi. 25, 26); those spirits doubtless through whom the signs are wrought. Higher than these we think the *Powers*, by whose virtue the power of darkness is repressed, and the malignity of the air constrained, so that it cannot harm as it would, nor cause disease except for good. We think the *Principalities* set over these, by whose management and wisdom all principality on earth is set up, ruled, limited, transferred, diminished, and changed. We think that the *Dominations* so far excel all the aforesaid orders, that, in respect of them, all these others seem to be ministering Spirits, and to them, as to their lords are referred the operations of the *Virtues*, the wardenship of the *Powers*, the government of the *Principalities*, the revelations of the *Archangels*, the care and providence of the *Angels*. We think the *Thrones* have soared to a high place apart even from these, and they are called *Thrones* because on them God sits. Dost thou ask what I mean by this sitting? Supreme tranquillity, most calm serenity, peace which surpasses all understanding. Such is He who sits upon the *Thrones*, the Lord of Hosts, judging all things with tranquillity, most calm, most serene, most peaceful;

and such He hath made the *Thrones*, most like unto Himself. We think the *Cherubim* draw from the very fountain of wisdom, the mouth of the Most High, and pour out streams of knowledge upon all His citizens. Is not this that of which the prophet spoke : *the stream of the river maketh joyful the City of God* (Psalm xlv. 4). We think that the *Seraphim*, spirits all aflame with divine fire, enkindle all things, that all its citizens may be burning and shining lights ; burning with love, shining with knowledge." \* Passing beyond these Spirits, Bernard says, with the Bride in the Song of Solomon : *When I had a little passed by them I found him whom my soul loveth* (Song of Songs, iii. 4). "What is it ? No better answer can be given than *He who is*." How can we know these things ? Discussion cannot lead to their comprehension, but holiness. *That we may be able to comprehend with all saints* (Eph. iii. 18), shows that comprehension is possible, but it is by being saintly. If thou art holy thou dost comprehend and know them ; if not, be so, and thou shalt know by thine own experience. Holy fear of God and Holy love lead to enlightenment, to comprehension of God. We cannot by discussion find Him out. And St. Bernard ends his book (*De Consideratione*) thus : "He is still to be sought, Who is not yet found enough ;

\* *De Consideratione*, v. 4, § 8. Dante embodies in his nine moving spheres this arrangement, with certain modifications, in the *Paradiso*, viii. 58-75, 94-148. See *Dante and the Mystics*, E. G. Gardner, London, 1913, pp. 128-131.

nor can He be sought too much ; but He is sought more worthily and found more easily by Prayer than by Discussion. Therefore this is the end of the book but not the end of our quest."

St. Bernard's mysticism had an ascetic base, and was not in any way independent of the dogmatic teaching of the Church. The Neoplatonic view as to the antagonistic influence of matter, a view, as we have seen, taken up by Professor Bergson, gave to mediæval asceticism its essential character, and, as we shall see, it furnished also to Christian Science the base of its chief tenet. Interest in material things was a snare for man's soul, whose sole aim in this life was union with God. Love of God grows with the knowledge of its object, until even love of self, the last impediment to the divine union, is merged in the love of the Highest.

The celebrated mystic Hugh of St. Victor (1096-1141) made a greater impression on the later Middle Ages than any of his successors. He was called "a Second Augustine." The great scholastic, Thomas Aquinas, wrote that "the sayings of Hugh of St. Victor are those of a master, and have the force of authority." \*

Hugh was the author of what may be regarded as the first text-book of theology,† a work which Aquinas frequently refers to. The ascent of the soul to God is thus dealt with in this book.

"Ascend whilst thou canst, as much as thou

\* *Summa Theologica*, II., ii, 5.

† *Concerning the Sacraments of the Christian Faith.*

canst, whither thou canst not [ascend?] too much nor yet utterly. Let thine all be filled out of Him, albeit His whole cannot be contained by thine. He will fill thee utterly and superabound over Himself." Dealing with the same subject he says in another treatise: "Three were the Ascensions of Christ: the Ascent of the Mountain, the Ascent of the Cross, the Ascent to the Father. Ours are likewise three: In *Act*, doing penance, whereby we conquer the devil; working justice, whereby we conquer the world; and mortifying our own will, which is victory over self. In *Affection*, to perfect humility, to consummate charity, and to the purity of contemplation. In *Understanding* whereby we ascend from the visible things of the world to the invisible things of our own spirit, and from these to the invisible things of God." \*

Richard of St. Victor, an Augustinian Canon at that abbey, followed Hugh, under whom he studied. Like John Erigena he was Irish by origin, and with a fervid Celtic imagination continued the building up of the fabric of the Church's mystical theology which St. Bernard and Hugh had begun.

Richard, like his master Hugh, shows how the mind may ascend the "high mountain apart" of the Gospels.

"If the mind would fain ascend to the height of science, let its first and principal study be to know

\* The translation is here and in subsequent passages that of E. G. Gardner, *op. cit.*

itself. The rational spirit's full knowledge is a great and high mountain. This mountain transcends all the peaks of all mundane sciences, and looks down upon all the philosophy and all the science of the world from on high. Could Aristotle, could Plato, could the great band of philosophers ever attain to it?"\* "When the mind is rapt above itself," he adds later, "it surpasseth all the limits of human reasoning. Elevated above itself and rapt in ecstasy, it beholdeth things in the divine light at which all human reason succumbs." But the mind must be pure to attain to this exalted height. Purity of heart and knowledge of self make the soul a mirror in which the invisible things of God are reflected. "Let him who thinks to see his God therefore cleanse his mirror, purify his Spirit." For the soul's ascent the support of Revelation is wanted as "even if you think," Richard says, "that you have been taken up into that high mountain apart, even if you think you see Christ transfigured, do not be too ready to believe anything you see in Him or hear from Him, unless Moses and Elias run to meet Him. I hold all truth in suspicion which the authority of the Scriptures does not confirm, nor do I receive Christ in His transfiguration unless Moses and Elias are talking with Him."†

The mind, in its upward progress, passes, according to Richard, through several grades of

\* *Benjamin Minor*, cap. lxxii.

† *Ibid.* lxxxi.



contemplation according as the objects of its contemplation are *Sensibilia*, or "visible things and perceptible by bodily sense;" *Intelligibilia*, or "invisible things, but comprehensible by reason;" *Intellectibilia*, "invisible things and incomprehensible to human reason," until at length the object of the mind's contemplation becomes what is above reason, and seems to be beside reason or even against it.

Richard is a firm advocate of free will. In a sentence which Dante translates, he, like Aquinas, believes that "no violence can be inflicted on the proper act of will itself."\* "Let all hell," he says, "all the world, even all the host of heaven, come together and combine in this one thing; they will not avail to extort a single consent from free will in anything not willed."

The Blessed Virgin occupies a high place in Richard's as in St. Bernard's faith. "She brought forth Grace Himself and is thus the very Fountain of grace which spreads through the world."

Among the Mystics who followed Richard was one Joachim of Flora, whose teaching had a wide influence, although some of that teaching was condemned at the Council of the Lateran in 1215. His teaching has also some reflections in modern substitutes for traditional Christianity. There seem to be more claimants than one for a new "Everlasting Gospel."

Joachim divided the periods of the world's history

\* *Chè volontà, se non vuol, non s'ammorza*, Par. iv. 76.

into three, corresponding with the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. The first is the rule or dispensation of the Father, extending from Aaron to Christ; the second is the dispensation of the Son—that is of the Church under the dispensation of the New Testament; and the third will be that of the Holy Ghost, when the “Everlasting Gospel” shall be preached unto all them that dwell on the earth (Rev. xiv. 6). This will be a new dispensation in which there will be no need for disciplinary institutions, for men will live according to the Spirit, and the letter of the Gospel will be made void and consumed by spiritual understanding.\*

Mr. Gardner (*Dante and the Mystics*) finds traces of Joachism in Dante. Thomas Aquinas condemns it. Had Mrs. Eddy ever heard of this teaching that she claims for her “Divine Science” that it was predicted in prophecy? It has a special interest also in regard to the developments of modern Mysticism in which the sacred documents of Christianity and the dogmas based on them are all transcended—direct spiritual communication with God occupying their place.

Bonaventura, the next great figure in the Mystic roll, goes back in his teaching to Augustine and Hugh of St. Victor. He makes use of the mystical doctrine of spiritual gravitation by which the soul is moved by love as the body by its weight. The love of God, as a great spiritual centre of gravity of the universe, is always drawing souls to Himself.

\* E. G. Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

Mysticism, as developed in Germany by such men as Eckhart and Tauler (15th century), did not depart from Catholic lines. The goal is still union with God, and the way to this goal is still that of purgation and contemplation. Self-will, an attempt to be something outside God, is the antagonist, and the cause, as Eckhart says, of moral evil. The human soul is not left without a guide to help it towards its goal. The mind, according to Eckhart, is a microcosm containing in a manner all things in itself, and has at its apex the "divine spark" akin to, and one with, God. This divine spark is a higher gift than grace. It is by it God "worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure." It is to this that all divine revelation appeals. The universe to it is the language of the Word, the Logos. It is in and by this spark the Holy Ghost works. Under this guidance the soul rejects all creatures and will have only God. Sin lies in clinging to the bodily nature, and not rising to God. Preaching on the conversion of St. Paul, Eckhart says: "When he arose he saw *nothing*, and because he saw *nothing* he saw God." That is, the obstacle to the divine vision is seeing, being taken up with, the world of sense. "What went ye out into the wilderness to see?" It is in the realisation that the world is a desert to the soul that we come to see and respond to the divine.

In the late developments of mysticism the "ecstatic vision" plays a more and more important

part. Julian of Norwich, St. John of the Cross, are well-known instances. But the assumption of an inner light granted to favoured persons is beset with dangers. Even those who claimed to have enjoyed these favours have realised such dangers, and have questioned at times whether they were not deceitful illusions. Still, human nature has its abnormal states. The phenomenon of dreaming raises doubts as to whether our waking-states are *absolutely* trustworthy. This life may be a dreaming-state in regard to a higher wakefulness.

“We are such stuff as dreams are made of,  
And our little life is rounded with a sleep.”

These words, in which Shakespeare represents our waking-life as a dream-existence within a sleep which death consummates and ends, stirred up in Goethe, as he tells us, a whole world of thought.

Language in the present stage of human evolution fails us when it is called upon to describe the deeper experiences of the soul. The devout mystic's visions may therefore be obscure fore-runners in a general trend towards fuller spiritual development, or they may be the outcome of certain pathological conditions in neurotic subjects, who, owing to the nervous instability consequent upon these conditions, may become receptive of impressions beyond the norm. In any case, the admission of abnormalities in experience tends to open the flood-gates to all sorts of illusions. Theosophy, Christian science, and a host of other aberrations of the human mind are all based upon

the assumption of experiences incapable of rational verification.

A short summary of the history of mysticism within the Church of Christ was a necessary prelude to the discussion of the subject to which this chapter is devoted—CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM DIVORCED FROM DOGMA. In the foregoing account mysticism is presented as the theological culmination of the traditional faith of the Church.

Professor Harnack, who regards mysticism as "rationalism applied to a sphere above reason," calls it "Catholic piety in general, so far as this piety is not merely ecclesiastical obedience or *fides implicata*." "The German mystics," he says, "expressed nothing not to be found in Origen, Plotinus, Dionysius, Augustine, Erigena, Bernard, and Aquinas." "It will never be possible," he adds, "to make mysticism Protestant without flying in the face of history and Catholicism." "A mystic who does not become a Catholic is," he says, "a dilettante." \*

An attempt, however, has been made recently to give mysticism a place in Christian thought, not in Protestantism, but in a new undogmatic form of religion which has no counterpart in the history of the past. This new form of mysticism is presented to us in a work by Miss Underhill, entitled *The Mystic Way*.

As far as can be gathered amid the odd

\* Quoted by Dr. Inge in the Appendix to his Bampton Lectures on Christian Mysticism.



expressions and the somewhat florid imagery with which Miss Underhill has invested her theses—*The Mystic Way*—her views seem to come to something like this: "Reality, presumably something distinct from the phenomenal, cannot be reached by what she calls the surface mind." The "surface mind" seems to be of a nature similar to "mortal mind," the boasted grand discovery of Mrs. Eddy. There is in consciousness an intuitive faculty which, in its expansion and illumination, lays hold of Reality. "The mystic transcends the physical world and obtains a footing there [*i.e.* in the beyond] by attention, perception, and response. He receives messages from the supernal sphere. The 'osmosis of spirit' is made possible by the soul's impressional attentiveness, or Love, the primary condition of our spiritual life" (p. 20). The "scrap of self-creative reality" within us—this is the only driving power of the soul in its path to the spiritual, and this is Love.\* "The power of living such a life (the mystic's) depends on organic adjustments, psychic changes, a heightening of our spiritual tension, not on acceptance of mere beliefs" (p. 33). The soul has to be placed in harmonious rhythm with the Divine by a changed outlook—that is, by

\* The term "osmosis" is used in physics to express the interchange between two liquids of different densities through an animal membrane separating them. Professor Bergson employs it to illustrate the possibility of thought transmission, or telepathy, between individuals (*Address to Physical Research Society*). Miss Underhill uses it in a kindred sense. The phrase "scrap of creative reality" is also Bergsonian.

*metanoia*, change of mind. This is the mystical awakening or conversion. "The true object of Christianity—hidden though it be beneath a mass of credal and ritual decorations—is the effecting of the changes which lead to the production of such mystics, such free souls. This is regeneration" (p. 33). Jesus was the greatest mystic. His "intuitive faculties were nourished by the splendid dreams of Hebrew prophecy" (p. 84). His appearance on the field of history at His baptism paralleled upon transcendent levels the psychological crisis of mystical awakening or conversion." His vision of the Dove descending upon Him at that event was subjective, and the hearing of the voice out of the heavens was one of the "instances of audition of the distinct 'interior words'" (p. 87), "whereby the spiritual genius translates the intuition of the transcendent into a form with which the 'surface mind' can deal."

This is the "cerebral pantomime of voice and vision, or the vivid light, which is nearly always the brain's crude symbol of that expansion and illumination of consciousness in which Reality breaks in upon it, or it breaks in upon Reality" (p. 88).

"The Transfiguration marks in Jesus the climax of the 'illuminated life'" (p. 124). "It marks the achievement in Him, under conditions completely human, of a transcendent life." "The Divine humanity is the Son of the Living God."

The process is "the entincturing of humanity

with Reality, the transmuting of 'salt, sulphur, mercury' into Alchemic Gold" (p. 125). Then in His Passion, "the dark night of the soul," suffering leads to the conviction that the Kingdom is not of this world.

"The strange glamorous dream in which Jesus lived went with Him still" (p. 129). In the days before His Passion "His surface intellect projected the shadow of these events against a universal and historical background: and this provided the general fluid outline of that 'Apocalyptic' picture—that 'Second Coming'—which the desire, the imagination, and experience of succeeding generations elaborated and defined" (p. 138).

Then with regard to the "Lord's Supper," she regards its institution as "the sudden intuition of a great prophetic mind, an ardent and self-giving heart" (p. 133).

The significance of the wine in its new relation is in the sentence "The blood is the Life." "The material and impermanent stuff of things (the bread) was propounded as the actual body of immortal spirit" (p. 134). The whole was to indicate "an extra dower of vitality."

"Gethsemane was the dark night of the soul" (p. 135). The process of "self-naughting," the antecedent to the "self-mergence in the mighty rhythm of Reality, which we call the unitive life" (p. 137).

"The Crucifixion marks the veritable establishment of the Kingdom of Reality: the new way

made clear,—emerging from human ruin and darkness in the hour of physical death.”

“Christ’s growth in the Transcendent Order was of an unequalled swiftness; a personal and impassioned consciousness of unbroken union with Reality was from the first the centre of His secret life” (p. 145).

Every great mystic is a means of spreading spiritual enlightenment—“Each is a thoroughfare whereby the sheaf-like spread of spirit is helped on.” The “barriers that had ring-fenced the spirit of man were effectively broken by Christ.” The Resurrection of Christ Miss Underhill calls a “great confused poem” (p. 148), and her treatment of it is equally confused. It was not, if one understands her aright, the case of the resuscitation of a body that had been dead. She speaks in this connection of “the mysterious art by which spirit weaves up a body from recalcitrant matter,” and dwells not upon the visual testimony of those who had seen Christ after His Resurrection, but on something that had called forth the vision. “Not the thing seen—necessarily seen under the limiting condition of the mind—but the action that evoked the vision,—here is the essential.” And she goes on to quote Professor Bergson, “There are no *things*; there are but actions” (p. 150). So the Resurrection was not a matter that could be rendered evident by sense-proofs. The disciples of our Lord did not know of it, according to Miss Underhill, in this way. “By intuition rather than by vision they

knew it" (p. 152). The effect on their mind is the important thing. "All we know about this movement," she says, "is contained in the synoptic records of the Resurrection, and in the mighty wave which rose from it which bore on its crest the Christian Church" (p. 150). Vagueness is a necessary result when simple historical records have to be squared with a transcendental theory wrapped in misty imagery.

Miss Underhill parallels with the life of our Lord, the spiritual career of St. Paul.

"St. Paul" to her "is the supreme example of the Christian mystic" (p. 159). His mysticism is first hand. It was from "his long period of self-discipline and self-adjustment, from deep brooding on the Revelation at Damascus, not from any apostolic statement about the human career of Jesus, that the Pauline gospel emerged" (p. 164). It was the "good news" of a new kind of life—experiences, not of a prophecy fulfilled. "He was the recipient of a triumphant inflow of new vitality."

St. Paul was not a subscriber to any common creed. "It is no common creed, but a direct intimation of the Transcendent, a *life* by which he is possessed" (p. 169). He had undergone "that slow transmutation of personality, that process of fresh creation which the mystics call New Birth" (p. 183). St. Paul "makes no distinction between those two manifestations of God which theology afterwards described as 'Son' and 'Spirit'" (p. 187).

The doctrine of apostolic succession takes a new



form: the mystics are "the real inheritors of the 'new direction of life'" (p. 190).

With "bodies of doctrine" Miss Underhill has little sympathy, although she propounds her own teaching in a somewhat dogmatic fashion. "The mystery of the kingdom consists, not in bodies of doctrine, or closed systems of beliefs, but in a new and amazing series of profound experiences; in the lift-up of his (St. Paul's) nature, and, therefore, potentially of all human nature to new levels of life" (p. 193). Miss Underhill quotes (p. 195) from Professor Ramsay the one great Pauline principle, "Only the Divine is real, all else is error."

With regard to the sacramental teaching of the Church Miss Underhill is severe.

"The sacramental magic of a later day (that is, than that of St. Paul), the 'one act' which transferred man from the world of nature to the world of grace, has no part in the Pauline scheme of things" (p. 196). She gives as the base of the great Apostle's teaching: "That outward-going, eager, endless push of life—God working within His own creation—which opposes the downward falling tendency of matter, is felt as known, as a fundamental part of Reality, by this great mystic" (p. 196).

According to Miss Underhill, Christianity began early to lose its ideals, departing from "interior facts" and emphasising outward "dramatic expression" (p. 275). "The springing up of the divine seed in the soul, the change of consciousness,

the emergence of the tendency to Reality, which begins the mystic way, was at last supposed to be conditioned by the external sign: as the interior feeding upon the Divine Nature was supposed to be conditioned by Eucharistic Communion" (p. 276). And all the while the true psychological process was, according to Miss Underhill, in antagonism with sacramental theory. "Psychological fact," she says, "refused to accommodate itself to magical theories of baptismal grace" (p. 279). "Participation in Reality, communication from the transcendental order," "readjustments towards the Universal Life," could be effected without external aids. They constitute a process of vital growth in which the nourishing elements are supplied from within. Knowledge even is not a necessary element. She blames Clement of Alexandria for "holding out more *knowledge* instead of more *life* to the neophyte," Clement thus showing "that the poison of Neoplatonism has entered his veins" (p. 283). Vital experience covers, in Miss Underhill's creed, all needful theology. The Church of the fourth century was engaged in suppressing this, and substituting for it deadening forms. "The belief in 'the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and Giver of Life,' found a place in the Nicene Creed; but this formula is merely a memorial raised over the sepulchre of vital experience" (p. 264). She contrasts with this degenerate state of things the fervid vitality of earlier Christianity. "The persistent exhibition

of 'Charismatic' gifts—the excellent courage of the martyrs, the sense of separation from the world,"—these "continued," it is true, "to a certain extent, though with ever-decreasing radiance, through the first three centuries of the Christian era" (p. 268). In this connection she regards the heresy of Montanism as an attempt at reformation of the Church, which from being a Church of the saints had degenerated into a semi-secular organisation. "Montanism," she says, "was really an attempt to check the rapid toning down and secularisation of Christianity, the rapid disappearance of Christian ideals" (p. 269). "The aim of Montanus was the establishment of a spiritual Church of spiritual men" (p. 270).

And this is the aim, it would seem, of modern mysticism, as presented by Miss Underhill—to restore the primitive ideal of Christianity, which, from the third century to the present day, has had its one great object concealed "beneath a mass of credal and ritual decorations." For an external organisation, such as has existed for eighteen hundred years, she would substitute a spiritual and invisible communion, made up of "those mystical souls, those true citizens of the kingdom, who constitute the 'invisible Church'" (p. 304).

Sufficient has been said of this fresh presentation of mysticism to show that it is not that which has always found a congenial place in the Christian Church, but something brand-new. Something of the nature of a blend of recent philosophy—

mainly that of Professor Bergson—with a kind of Quakerism, tags of mystical expressions being introduced here and there to give it the appearance of a development of mediæval mysticism.

From the point of view of this new mysticism it would seem that an external organisation, a priesthood, a systematic theology, creeds, sacramental institutions, are not only of no use in the building up of that Church against which the gates of hell were not to prevail, but are actual impediments to the realisation of the true aims of Christianity.

We can readily imagine the chaos which would result from substituting for the creeds and teaching of the Church, assertions not less dogmatic about "a Life of Reality," "organic psychological growth," "osmosis of spirit," "self-creative Reality," "intervention of the Transcendent," "growth in the Transcendent Order," "transmutation of personality," "inheritors of the new directions of Life," etc., etc.

A presentation of Christianity, for which there exists no real counterpart in the history of the Church from its origin, would require, one would think, a fresh Revelation to establish it; but Miss Underhill's mysticism has no such credentials. It is not even a reasoned system which would commend itself to the rational mind. So far as the desire to make Religion a life is concerned, there is much in Miss Underhill's book worthy of praise; but in the general mass of material which she has laboriously put together there is little that could

help the soul grappling with the enigmas of life. To those who, wearied of theological controversy, are seeking for a religion needing no external authority, and satisfying at the same time the natural instinct, this book will not give relief.

Mediæval mysticism might possibly be detached, as the late Father Tyrrell seemed to think, from the dogmatical system which gave it expression, and might thus serve as the religion of many who cannot bring themselves to accept historic Christianity. If Miss Underhill's aim was to do this, she has not succeeded. She has substituted new dogmas for the old, travestying the latter where she sees her way to adopt them. There is thus little likelihood of *The Mystic Way* leading to a new cult, even in an age which is dissatisfied with the old and familiar.



## MODERN THEOSOPHY

THE name "Theosophy" goes back to the third century A.D., and represented in the Greek thought of the time speculation as to the nature of God and the development of the Divine Essence. The late Neoplatonic doctrines regarding "emanations" from the Deity, and the cognate teaching of the Gnostics as to these emanations under the name of "æons," belong to Theosophy. But with these early speculations as to God and His attributes, modern Theosophy has very little, if anything at all, to do.

Modern Theosophy was founded in the United States by Madame Blavatzky in the year 1875. "The body of doctrine" presented to the world by the Theosophists was, as Mrs. Besant tells us,\* "obtained by separating the beliefs, common to all religions, from the peculiarities, specialities, rites, ceremonies, and customs which mark off one religion from another." This element common to all religions has amongst Theosophists a mysterious origin. "The community of religious teachings, ethics, stories, symbols, ceremonies, and even traces of these among savages, arose," Mrs. Besant

\* *Theosophy*, by Annie Besant, President of the Theosophical Society. T. C. and E. C. Jack, London; no date, but 1912, p. 12.

writes,\* “from the derivation of all religions from a common centre, from a Brotherhood of Divine men, which sent out one of its members into the world from time to time to found a new religion, containing the same essential verities as its predecessors, but varying in form with the needs of the time, and with the capacities of the people to whom the messenger was sent.” That is, religion is not based on God’s revelation of Himself, or in any sense a natural development of humanity, the outcome of the faculties with which man is endowed, but something communicated by “a splendid array of messengers.” Who are these messengers? “Theosophy has long taught,” says Miss McNeile, a lady who went out to India with the intention of working with Mrs. Besant, “that great root races succeed each other at long periods on the earth. We are ourselves in the fifth sub-race of the Fifth Root Race, and the beginning of the sixth is shortly to be expected. At the birth of each sub-race a Supreme Teacher appears to guide its destinies, and enable it to make its special contribution to the religions of the world. The present Fifth Root Race is that of the Aryans, and the Supreme Teachers of the second, third, and fourth sub-races were the same Boddhisattva—the word on this occasion denoting a great Being—who, through successive incarnations, had worked off his Karma, and so had passed beyond the need of rebirth, but who came to earth again to help

\* *Ibid.*, p. 14.

mankind. This great Being was born as Hermes among the vanished race which dwelt ages ago on the shores of the Mediterranean. He came again as Zoroaster for the Iranians, and as Orpheus for the fourth sub-race, which comprised the Latins, Greeks, and Celts. After this he was incarnated for the last time as Gautama Siddhartha, and received his final initiation by which he became the Buddha, 'the enlightened One,' and so 'He passed away and became the Son united with the Father' (*The Changing World*, p. 142). To take his place another appeared as Boddhisattva, and manifested himself about the time of the fifth sub-race, the Teutonic. This was the Christ, the name being derived, not as every student of Christianity knows from the Greek equivalent of Messiah, anointed, but from a certain grade in the Orphic Mysteries known as the Christos or Chrestos (χρηστος)! But this time he did not incarnate (above, p. 147, and *Esoteric Christianity*, ch. 4). He made use of the body of a disciple, the man Jesus of Nazareth; and in the same way He is shortly to make use of the body of another disciple at the dawn of the sixth sub-race, the disciple in this case being the boy J. Krishnamurti.

"Jesus was an advanced disciple, but not yet in the final stages of the way. He was born about 100 B.C., and was initiated in an Essene community, where he learnt much of the wisdom of the East (!). His spotless mind and body made Him a suitable vehicle for the use of the Great

One, the Christ. In the scene in the garden the Christ, having finished His great work of teaching, returned the body to His suffering disciple, in whose person the last scenes of the tragedy were enacted." \* "The man Jesus subsequently became a Master, after completing His initiations, in the person of Apollonius of Tyana. . . . The world Teacher who is coming again is a Being far higher and more exalted. The identification of Jesus with the Christ is due to gross ignorance, and the Gospel narrative is the crude degradation into the semblance of historical fact of sublime truths accessible to occultists alone. The Creeds were originally a summary of the oral teaching given to candidates for initiation, but in their present form are little more than a collection of crude blunders by misguided redactors who ignorantly imagined them to refer to historical facts!" † "What," Miss McNeile proceeds to ask, "is the authority for all this?" And the answer given is simple. "Every event in history, every word spoken, every action done, leaves its indelible imprint on the finest etheric matter. These etheric, or akashic, records are accessible to the trained occultist—that is to say, formerly to Mme. Blavatsky, at the present time to Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater (*Esoteric Christianity*, p. 127)." ‡

One literally stands aghast before this rigmarole

\* *The East and the West*, April, 1913; *Theosophy and the Coming of Christ*, by E. K. McNeile, pp. 152, 153.

† *Ibid.*, p. 153.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

of balderdash. There are complaints on all hands of the defective state of our educational methods. Could there be a more glaring proof of this contention, than the fact that this stuff is presented to Christian men and women as credible, and as not incompatible with Christianity? The amazement is increased when one considers that two or three clergymen, who are presumed to have some learning and some knowledge of the laws of evidence, have taken up this maddest of mad crazes. Are they sane? But the culmination of these absurdities has yet to be told. "The world Teacher, when he comes, will require for the time being the use of the physical body of a disciple, and the choice (as has been already said) has fallen to the boy Krishnamurti, otherwise known by his *nom de plume* of Alcyone."

This boy, together with his brother, it is stated, had been placed by his father under the wardenship of Mrs. Besant, who took them to Benares, where, in January, 1911, a society was formed among the students of the Central Hindu College, under the title of the Order of the Sun, to promote preparations for this coming.

"The boy Krishnamurti was made prominent in the order, and it was the practice of the members to prostrate themselves before him and touch his feet, an act of homage well understood to imply an act of worship."\* The order, for

\* Miss McNeile's article in *The East and the West* for April, 1913, p. 155.



certain reasons, was suppressed, but it was speedily replaced by the Order of the Star in the East, of which Krishnamurti is Head, and Mrs. Besant Protector. "The boy J. Krishnamurti was," says Miss McNeile, "led into improper habits by Mr. Leadbeater while under his influence in Madras in 1910. The father repeatedly requested Mrs. Besant to remove him (the boy) from this influence, and to this end consented to his being taken to England. Later, alarmed by the reports concerning his son, he requested Mrs. Besant to bring the boys back to India." She returned without them in the autumn of 1912, and the father thereupon brought a suit against her for the restoration of the boys.

In April of the present year (1913) the case came before Mr. Justice Bakewell of the Madras High Court, and was decided in favour of the father, against which decision Mrs. Besant has appealed. The report of the judgment in the papers of April 15 states: "His Lordship then dealt with the eighth and ninth issues as to whether the defendant (Mrs. Besant) permitted the children to associate with a person of immoral character, and the evidence relating to the same. In regard to Mr. Leadbeater, his Lordship observed that in the witness box he admitted that he held what his Lordship could only describe as frankly immoral opinions. No father could be obliged to confide in the promises of such a person." The *Maharatta*, an Indian newspaper, commenting on the trial, makes these remarks: "It is a case of a boy taken

from the custody of an educated, affectionate, and well-to-do father, for being exploited in a scheme of spiritual aggrandisement, and refused to be given back, on the strength of a formal document, even after complaint was made against his being in charge of a tutor who was known to preach and justify clearly immoral practices." Miss McNeile, in the article in *The East and the West*, calls to remembrance "that similar charges were made against Mr. Leadbeater in America a few years ago, and on Mrs. Besant reinstating him in an official position in the Theosophical Society, a considerable number of influential members withdrew." The *Maharatta* proceeds in its comments on the trial: "Is not irony, which is very often the most favourite instrument of Nemesis, as complete as complete can be in this case? Can even the most original of minds conceive of a more ludicrous setting for the second incarnation of Christ than the close guardianship of the blighting arms of a professor of Onanism? And what is perhaps more ludicrous still is that high spiritual status and unfulfilled spiritual aims should be solemnly pleaded as an imperative reason in favour of continuing the abominable state of things." Principal A. G. Fraser of Ceylon comments: "Filthy though the work is, it is but right that this revived mystery-religion should be recognised in its true light, as a work of darkness and fraud."

In face of this awful record, any further examination of the credentials of modern Theosophy seems

needless. Still, some of the elements of the system, if it can be called a system, must have had an attraction for its adherents, or they could not have persisted in upholding it.

A certain amount of cunning has been expended in spreading the net wide enough to catch victims. Eastern and Western thought—both ancient and modern—has been explored with the view of selecting elements that have a certain plausibility, and attractiveness for emotional minds. The phraseology even of modern science has been trenched upon to give a scientific aspect to the crudities which are offered to the untrained thinker.

The system of the Universe, as presented by Mrs. Besant in Section VI. of *Theosophy*, is an insult to the understanding of a child of the fifth standard in our Board school. It is an astounding jumble of incoherent scraps picked unintelligently out of quasi-scientific books by the Theosophist leaders. The late scientific guess that matter might consist of "holes in the æther" has been adopted as an ascertained fact. From aggregates of these "holes" all that is called matter is built up. The holes, or "bubbles," as Mrs. Besant calls them, "are visible to the sight of the third or spiritual sphere, and one can see that He (that is, 'the Logos of a solar system enclosing a huge fragment of the universal æther, thus bubble filled') sets up a great whirl of force, which sweeps the bubbles together in a huge mass." The Logos

in another aspect—the creative—builds “bubbles” into atoms, aggregates atoms into molecules, and finally builds these into the six familiar sets of combinations which in the physical world are called “sub-atomic, super-etheric, etheric, gaseous, liquid, solid.” By an impulse of the Life-wave of Creative Thought, the “monadic sphere” is made of groupings of the bubbles into atoms—“causing minute vortices, each of which draws in 49 bubbles.” “Each atom consists of 49 bubbles.” “A second impulse of the Life-wave separates out a quantity of these 49-atom bubbles, dissociates them and recombines them in vortices, each of which contains 49<sup>2</sup> bubbles, the atoms of the spiritual world.” A third impulse issues in 49<sup>3</sup> bubbles, the atoms of the “intuitional world,” and so on by further impulses to 49<sup>4</sup>, 49<sup>5</sup>, 49<sup>6</sup>, corresponding respectively to the “mental,” “astral,” and “physical” worlds. “The Life of the Logos is the whirling force within the atom that holds its component parts together.” Here there is a reminiscence of Professor Sir J. J. Thomson’s electron theory worked into this wild Theosophic scheme. Mrs. Besant makes short work of the scientific belief that consciousness cannot influence matter. “Each change in consciousness,” she says, “is at once answered by a change of vibration in the corresponding matter.” “All the matter of the emotional or astral sphere is comprised of atoms, the Life in which is emotion, and the measure of vibration of which is correlated to emotion, to express and respond to it. The

whole huge gamut of emotions, passions, desires is played by consciousness in this matter." Mrs. Besant has no more trouble about the law of the conservation of energy than she has about the possibility of the action of consciousness on matter.

Then follows a rigmarole about Globes, Chains, Ruler of Seven Chains, Neptunean and Terrene Chains, etc., a condition of things in which the astronomer of the present day would find himself in Bedlam. It is not a little concession to her readers that she adds, "it is naturally very complicated." It is evidently beyond her powers to make it intelligible.

There is one thing in the Theosophical scheme which may have led some to recognise in it an explanation of the differences between the degrees and conditions of men which one sees in life. The explanation of human inequalities: why one man is born rich and others poor. Why one is born to suffering and another to a joyous existence. Why one man has got a hunchback and another is straight. The revival of the belief in the transmigration of souls—a doctrine which is more than 2000 years old, and had been deliberately rejected at an early date by the Christian Church—gives, according to the Theosophist, a complete account of the inequalities in life. Every ill that we may have, or every pleasant thing that we possess, is the result of a good or bad action done in a previous and unremembered state of existence. This



it is contended, is an absolute law, and can no more be interfered with than the law of gravitation. The doctrine of *Karma* is at the base of this absolute law. This is a very ancient Indian doctrine. Professor Deussen of Kiel, the great Vedantic scholar, thus describes its working. "Life in quality as well as quantity is the altogether fitting and measured expiation of the deeds of a previous existence. The expiation takes place through enjoying and acting, which are again converted inevitably into deeds that must be expiated anew in a subsequent existence, so that the clock-work of requital in running down always winds itself up again." Principal Fraser thinks that, according to believers in Karma, the average number of rebirths of an individual, before expiation is fully effected, is something like 185,000.

The Theosophist's belief in reincarnations is not likely to be influenced by arithmetical considerations, but the question of rebirths has to be dealt with from that point of view. The relation of births to deaths in the whole world annually shows that there is a margin in favour of an increase of the population every year. That is, the average number of new births annually would supply fresh bodies for those who have died in the same period, and would leave a moderate percentage over. Each person dying could thus be accommodated with a fresh body if he had *one* reincarnation, and *one* reincarnation only. But if we are to take the average number of reincarnations of each individual

at anything like 185,000, the impossibility of supplying bodies for them becomes glaring. It is not only for those who have died in any *one* year for which new bodies have to be provided. All those millions of dead who have not yet completed their pilgrimages through 185,000 reincarnations, have to find new bodies. The annual births in the whole world would not furnish more than a small percentage of fresh bodies for the dead individuals of by-gone ages who are still clamouring for them. What is to be done? The dead cannot be left without bodies, or they would *never* get through their incarnations, and thus relieve themselves of their *Karma*. It is in *earthly* bodies alone, too, they are to do the work of expiation for former deeds, as Mrs. Besant is careful to explain (*Theosophy*, p. 58). Man's three higher bodies are permanent, she says, and the three lower, temporal, "existing through a definite life cycle in three worlds—the earth, the intermediate world, and heaven. With his return to earth he assumes new bodies, and this is Reincarnation." It is the inequalities shown in *this world* that Reincarnation is to explain, and therefore, if there are not enough new bodies to go round, the whole thing must thus come to an untimely and ignoble end.

A further difficulty has to be got over. Children resemble as a rule one or other of their present or remote parents. Each new being coming into the world takes its substance and qualities from *both*

parents, and, through them, from male and female ancestors more remote. If the Theosophists would take the trouble to study the works of Professor Bateson on Heredity, and the theory known as Mendelism, they would discover the impossibility of reconciling the rebirth doctrine with the teaching of the latest science. They are ready to grasp at any theory of modern science which may seem to bear out their scheme. Why do they not consider the laws of heredity? If Mrs. Besant was born in a previous existence as a Brahman, as she contends, her physical as well as mental qualities ought to be Brahmanic. She cannot take on a Brahmanic *Karma* without assuming the Brahmanic character, involving all that makes an individual Brahman differ from any other individual. Perhaps the characteristic of colour is only skin-deep, and therefore Mrs. Besant lacks *this* testimony to her origin, but she pretends to remember her Brahmanic existence, so memory (which, she says, "has its seat in the intellect, not in the mind"), if not colour, is hereditary.

Professor Weissmann's theory of the non-transmissibility of acquired characteristics, which is largely accepted by biologists, runs also right up against the theory of *Karma*. No acquired habit, according to that theory, can be transmitted from parent to child. *Karma* demands that expiations in one incarnation should count in the next. Weissmannism says that nothing acquired is transmissible.

*Karma*, moreover, goes on without interference. "You need not," Mrs. Besant says, "be troubled about *Karma* any more than by the law of gravitation. You cannot interfere with it."\* But Mrs. Besant's philosophy is full of contradictions. Elsewhere she says, "Karma is a Law of Nature: it compels the ignorant, but it gives freedom to the Wise. . . . Karma being the result at any given time of all the thoughts, desires, and actions of the past, manifested in our character, our opportunities, and our environment, it limits our present. . . . But as we created so we can *change* it."

From one point of view Mrs. Besant regards *Karma* as involving a belief in the doctrine of necessity. And as it is only *Karma* that counts in human evolution, fatalism would seem to reign supreme. "There is no escape," says Mrs. Besant. "There is no such thing in Nature as forgiveness." Why, then, take any trouble to teach *Karma*? Why endure the sneers and opposition of an unbelieving world, when everything will go on inevitably without interference from without? It is surely a purely futile and thankless task to turn the world's attention to the operation of a law which, in Mrs. Besant's words, "we are not to be troubled about." Silence in such circumstances would surely be golden. Mrs. Besant must have seen this possible retort, so she makes *Karma* elsewhere something which can be interfered with.

\* Quoted by Principal Fraser, *Christianity and Theosophy*.

Theosophists again claim powers which transcend anything asserted in mediæval legend. In Mr. Leadbeater's *The Christian Creed* we are told that "clairvoyant investigators" have seen earlier Christian documents than are accessible to the literary critic, and have thus been enabled to correct the Christian creed by collating it with Greek originals. Let us see how this faculty works. The redactors of early Christian documents have been more mischievous than those who have provided a hard task for the literary critic in setting straight the mangling of the Old Testament effected by them. In this way the belief "in Jesus Christ" in the Creed is made to be, by a redactor's "materialising influence," a substitute for the clairvoyant's reading "chiefest Healer," or simply (for there is a doubt even among the clairvoyants) "the most Holy One." The author feels, however, the futility at present of insisting upon these amended readings. "It is, however," he says, "of little use for us to speak of those various readings until some explorer on the physical plane (he apparently means a literary critic) discovers a manuscript containing them, for then only will the world of scholars be disposed to listen to the suggestions which naturally follow from them" (p. 68). The clairvoyants, moreover, in "the earliest Greek manuscripts they have yet been able to find," read, for the "Pontius Pilate" of the received Creed, "a compressed or densified sea," and the whole clause, "suffered under Pontius Pilate," "should be rendered He



(that is "the chiefest Healer") endured the dense sea" (p. 78)! Could ignorant audacity on the one hand go further, and on the other human credulity?

To give some sort of credence to the marvellous power claimed by Theosophist clairvoyants, Mrs. Besant (*Theosophy*, p. 56) introduces what is called in the East *Yoga*. "The word," she says, "means 'union,' and is used to indicate the conscious union of the particular with the universal Self (that is, with the Theosophist Pantheistic Deity), and all the efforts leading to that consummation." This is on the line with the Christian mystic's "union with God," but it involves more wonderful consequences. "The method of yoga," Mrs. Besant goes on to say, "is purely scientific, the knowledge of the laws of mental and intellectual evolution having been gained by observation and established by experiment." "Thought concentrating itself attentively on any idea builds that idea into the character of the thinker," and through the practice of yoga one may "unroll and read the imperishable scroll of the past." This scroll of the past is called elsewhere "etheric" or "akashic" records, "in which every event in history, every word spoken, every action done, leaves its indelible imprint on the finest of etheric matter," as writes Miss McNeile. Etheric Vision would thus be very useful to physicists as well as historians, for it "may be used for examining minute objects, such as chemical atoms, or the wave forms of electrical

and other forces" (whatever these may mean) (*Theosophy*, p. 27). This vision would be also of incalculable value to the folk-lorists, for it may be used "for studying such of the nature-spirits as use etheric matter for their lowest bodies—fairies, gnomes, brownies, and creatures of that ilk" (*ibid.*, p. 27). "Astral vibrations" can be excited also by "some drugs, such as hashish, bhang, opium, and extreme alcoholic poisoning," and then the patients catch glimpses of some inhabitants of the astral world." The hallucinations in D. T. are thus explained. "The horrors," she says, "which torment a man suffering from *delirium tremens* are largely due to the sight of the loathsome elementals that gather round places where liquor is sold, and feed on its exhalations!" Is Mrs. Besant laughing at us? Or is this vision of hers, employed in the recognition of occult things, a garbling of the Law of the Conservation of Energy, or is it a paraphrase of Professor William James's conjectural "cosmic reservoir where the memory of all mundane facts is stored, and grouped around personal centres of association"? In any case it is a wonderful claim, and if realisable would do away with the *British Association* and the labour of the investigator in every field.

It is to be noted in regard to the propaganda of modern Theosophy that the method pursued in England is diametrically opposed to that used in India, and the disciples aimed at respectively in the two countries are entirely different. "In England,"

as Miss McNeile says, "the policy aimed at is that of the utmost conciliation. A strenuous effort is being made here to win over Christians, and such Christian nomenclature is adopted as tends to obscure the fundamental differences. In India such fraternising, except in very rare cases, is unknown. Here the coveted ally is the orthodox Hindu pundit." The Theosophical Society in India "stands as the champion of Hinduism against what it represents as a mere Western religion. A shrine to Sarasvati (the Goddess of Learning) stands in the quadrangle of the Central Hindu College at Benares, an image of Hanuman (the Monkey God) at the gate of the Hostel, and a little red Ganesh (the Elephant God) over the door of Mrs. Besant's private house" (*The East and the West*, April, 1913, p. 151).

The seductive appeal made in the programme of the society submitted to the English public is a marvel of ingenuity. All that is required in an adherent is the acknowledgment of "human brotherhood." "The society has no dogmas," it is asserted, "and, therefore, no heretics. It does not shut any man out because he does not believe the Theosophical teachings. A man may deny every one of them, save that of human Brotherhood." He could believe in human Brotherhood without joining the society, and as he may deny all the teaching of Theosophy while he is a member of the society, why ask him to join the Theosophists at all? Once within the net, however, there is

hope of his ultimate capture. But "surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird?" And what a net-work of fraud it is. "Its founder, Madame Blavatsky," as Principal Fraser says, "was proved to have committed frauds in India, and of course, never dared to take her challengers into the Law Courts; and before the Psychical Research Society, a very competent and unprejudiced scientific body, as you know, she was adjudged guilty of fraud." "I think there are five who may be considered the chief leaders. Mr. Judge, Madame Blavatsky, and Mr. Leadbeater are three of them. Mr. Judge was proved guilty of forgery and was removed from the headship of the society. Mrs. Besant officially covered up the forgery of Mr. Judge, and called him 'one of the greatest and noblest workers in our Movement, even though in the last days of his life he made a great rent in the Theosophical Society.'" And Mr. Leadbeater? Enough of his qualifications for leadership of a spiritual society has been given, in Mr. Justice Bakewell's scathing remarks at the trial in Madras, to enable any one to form an adequate opinion.

"Beware," said our Lord, "of false prophets. . . . Ye shall know them by their fruits. . . . A good tree *cannot* bring forth evil fruit."

## CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

CHRISTIAN Science was discovered and founded in 1865 by an American lady who is styled the "Reverend Mary Baker G. Eddy," and called the "Reverend Mother of the Christian Scientists." Her teaching is contained in a book entitled *Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures*, which is said to be "one with the Bible," and can be bought bound in one volume with it. Of the book, we are told, over 400,000 copies have been circulated, and the result of the propaganda has been the forming of many communities of Christian Science, and many so-called churches in America, England, and elsewhere.

The foundation of the teaching of Mrs. Eddy is that Spirit is the great reality. "God is the Principle of Christian Science," she says in the book referred to, and "God is all," and "God is the Supreme Being, the only Life, Substance, and Soul, and the only Intelligence of the Universe including man." The unity of all intelligence is a principle insisted upon throughout her book. Mrs. Eddy writes in one place in regard to the source of her belief in Oneness, in God as our Life, "Whence came to me this heavenly conviction



—a conviction in antagonism with the testimony of the physical sense? I know not.” In another place, however, she asserts, “The Bible has been my only text-book. I have had no other guide in the straight and narrow way of this science” (*Science and Health*, p. 20).

And what in the Bible has she found that has escaped the eyes of all commentators from the beginning of Christianity. The Unity of God is there, and no one, perhaps, would dispute that He is the source of all things, the “supreme and only intelligence of the universe.” But she proceeds to elaborate from this foundational principle a quasi-philosophical system, which, it is safe to say, no one but herself and her followers has found within the sacred Book. Yet she calls the method by which she has reached her deductions purely scientific, the “true science of God,” “though,” she adds, “departing from the realm of the physical, as it must, some may deny its right to the name of Science.” This forecast will be fully justified when her deductions are examined.

It would be a tedious and unsatisfactory work to take *verbatim* Mrs. Eddy’s deductions as presented in her two books, *Health and Science*, and *Retro-spection and Introspection*, the former of which has, moreover, been frequently revised. The exposition of her philosophy in the works named is so full of contradictions and repetitions that little good result can be attained by quoting from them, but we shall attempt to deal with some of her definite

statements later on. The inconsequential character of her books, and the imperfections of her grammar, has a natural explanation. For, as one of her ardent defenders has said (*A Plea for the Unbiased Investigation of Christian Science*, London, 1913, p. 17), "Mrs. Eddy had only such advantages as were available in a small town of New England sixty or seventy years ago, and she was in a great measure self-taught. Consequently, when she wrote her book she did not express herself as possibly she might have expressed herself had she had the same educational advantages as her critics." For this reason, perhaps, she has been wrongly interpreted, and the writer of the work just named tries to make Mrs. Eddy's meaning clearer by presenting her doctrine in a more comprehensible way. He takes as his basis for the right apprehension of Mrs. Eddy the following paragraph from her *Health and Science*.

"There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite mind and its infinite manifestations, for God is All-in-All; Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and Eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material: he is spiritual." He then adds: "If Christian Science is true, then Mrs. Eddy has stated in that single paragraph one of the most comprehensive systems of philosophy ever presented to the world, a paragraph that presents

God's perfect spiritual creation as being the one absolute fact and reality of life, in contra-distinction to the material world, which, Christian Science teaches, is but a false sense or counterfeit of that perfect spiritual creation. When we think of God's spiritual creation, it must be borne in mind that the real man and all life are included in that creation, and God must not be thought of as apart from His creation, but that 'all is infinite Mind (God) and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-All.' In other words, 'the unseen spiritual world is the real world, absolutely perfect and harmonious, and the physical or material world that is revealed to us by our physical senses is not the real world (although so real to those physical senses), but is a false or incorrect presentation of the real spiritual world that is behind all we see.' The writer goes on to illustrate this point in the following manner: "Imagine a ball of light. Let the ball of light represent God and His perfect spiritual creation. Mortal man, looking at the ball of light, sees only a blurred image, as this is all his physical senses present to him. The ball of light is God and His spiritual creation, but the blurred image is not God: it is unreal, or but a counterfeit of the real: it is the material world." This means that the illusion which we call the physical world arises from the defective character of our senses. The blurring of reality is subjective, and, therefore, has no external counterpart. And commenting on Mrs. Eddy's statement

that "There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter . . . matter is mortal error . . . matter is the unreal and temporal," he goes on to say, "it is quite clear that we have to regard matter as apart from God, whatever our conception or explanation of it may be." As the writer of this explanation has, as he says, "submitted a draft of his MS. to the authorised London representative of the Christian Science movement, who has very kindly confirmed the accuracy of the statements," we may assume that his presentation is authoritative.

Seeing that Mrs. Eddy has stated, as already said, that "The Bible has been my only text-book," the foregoing exposition must necessarily be meant to correspond with the account of creation in the first chapter of Genesis, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Were these material things, or only blurred images of reality, erroneous subjective impressions? And if they, and the further material things which God created, were unreal, and "mortal error," how comes it that He called them "good"? It is clear that Mrs. Eddy had some other explanation of the Biblical narrative of creation.

She regards the account of Creation in Genesis as referring to what she calls "Spiritual Creation," and the man, too, whom God made must have had no material sense. That is, Creation was invisible to mortal sense. And man must, therefore, have been made without those misleading sense organs

to which are to be ascribed his recognition of the majesty and beauty of the Universe. How, in the absence of these sense organs, did he hear or read anything about God? How could any one apart from them read Mrs. Eddy's revelations? But where did she get all this incomprehensible stuff from? Not from her "only text-book," in which she will certainly find no disparaging words concerning material creation; but, on the contrary, terms that make it a vehicle of divine teaching. "The heavens declare the glory of God"—"Consider the lilies of the field." No! she did not get her views of matter from the Bible. She must have got them from philosophy, or from a fresh revelation that renders obsolete the old. The writer of *A Plea for the Unbiased Investigation of Christian Science* says (p. 49): "The Bible is not the complete book it has been assumed to be. Once," he continues, "the fact was brought home to the religious world that the Bible could not be accepted without question, but must be regarded as a mine in which the pearls of inspired truth are hidden, the harsh doctrines, so cruel to men and dishonouring to God, were sooner or later bound to go." "Christian Scientists," he goes on to say, "are among the sincerest seekers after truth, and do not accept anything as true simply because they find it in the Bible, or because Mrs. Eddy wrote it, but only when intuition, spiritual perception, and experience have proved its truth" (p. 51). The Bible needs, therefore, something



other than itself for its interpretation. The guidance of the Church, however, must give place to the Christian Scientists' "intuition, spiritual perception, and experience." We shall see how these work later on.

Mrs. Eddy has clearly had, in drawing up her philosophy, many collaborators, whose hands are seen in the alterations and revisions of her *Health and Science*. From the very beginning of her "discovery" they seem to have been at work to cull from current philosophic literature means for helping her to develop her foundation statements "God is all," and "God is mind," "therefore there is nothing else than mind."

Among the ancient philosophies which have been more or less popularised in modern times, and thus made accessible to Mrs. Eddy's coadjutors, is that of the Neoplatonist Plotinus. Perhaps Mrs. Eddy and her helpers never heard of him, but Neoplatonic ideas have been in recent years at the base of many speculations in America and elsewhere. In the short summary of the philosophy of Plotinus given in the Introduction, it was pointed out that he considered every object as in the sphere of mind, and that a universe outside thought is unthinkable. The world, to him, was nothing else than the thought of God transmuted into vital law. Thought, he said, is cause, and not effect, determined only by the laws of truth and goodness. The facts of sense, which we think most certain, are really, Plotinus thought, least certain. Matter

itself, to him was immaterial: it has "no body." It cannot be said either to exist or not exist. Actually it is nothing. And Plato, the master of Plotinus, said that we conceived of it by a "bastard reasoning." Another favourite image of Plotinus in describing matter was used also by St. Paul. "The world," Plotinus says, "is like a mirror in which a man sees the shadows of realities. Only," he adds, "you see the mirror, and do not see matter."

Compare this with the blurred image of the ball of light, the counterfeit of the real, the material world. Is the discovery of Mrs. Eddy anything different from what Plotinus had found out nearly seventeen hundred years before? The only difference between the two views is in the fact that the philosophy of Plotinus is clear and consistent, having been fully thought out, while that of Mrs. Eddy is halting and contradictory. There are curious coincidences in the world, and this may be nothing more, but when we come further to compare the views of Plotinus about evil in the world with those of Mrs. Eddy, the resemblance will be found so striking that the chances of coincidence is hardly thinkable. Let us examine in the meantime the one fundamental statement from which Christian Science deduces its conclusions—conclusions which are assumed to be indisputable.

"God is perfect, God is good." That is the foundation upon which the indestructible edifice of Christian Science is built. Can any one dispute

it? And if he cannot, does it not follow inevitably that everything which proceeds from God must be perfect and good? But the material world is not perfect, the Christian Scientist declares, and man as we see him is far from being perfect and good. How explain this anomaly? God did not create the material world, they say, but only the spiritual. He did not create the mortal mind of man—that is, the human senses by which man perceives the visible world. The “false human consciousness” also, which makes evil appear so real to us, we must seek an explanation for “apart from God, into whose perfect consciousness no evil can enter” (*op. cit.*, p. 29). God’s creation is therefore a spiritual creation only, and all that is not spiritual did not proceed from God. Nay, more; God is not conscious of the material world. “God,” says the writer already cited, “has no knowledge of evil, and is not conscious of this material world, with all its sin, sickness, and suffering” (p. 35).

This is an astounding position. God not only did not make the material world, or the material part of man, but He is unconscious of their existence! “All things were made by him (the Word),” said St. John. But Mrs. Eddy’s defender writes, “Christian Science does not say that because certain passages in the Bible are not logically in accord with the accepted bases they are not true, but that they must have a deeper meaning than appears on the surface, and that spiritual perception will reveal the meaning to the sincere seeker

after truth." Perhaps "spiritual perception" will see that St. John here refers to the spiritual world alone, and everything else either made itself, or was the product of some Demiurge.

The defender of Christian Science must often find himself in a difficult place in attempting to explain to the neophyte the existence or non-existence of the "mortal mind," and the universe with which it deals. He can hardly say to the inquirer they are *nothing*. The tongue he employs to teach the aspirant, the waves of air that convey the sounds, the ear that hears, are all material things, counterfeits, as they may be, of "reality," but without these or similar materialistic vehicles no one would have ever heard of Mrs. Eddy, or of spiritual creation, or of new methods of healing the ills of humanity.

Let us try to help the defender of Christian Science in his difficulties, by showing, if we can, whence the trouble proceeds. Does it not lie in the major premiss of Christian Science—in the words "perfect" and "good." These words represent ideas gathered in what Mrs. Eddy would call our "false consciousness," by comparisons made within a material world. They are what is known as relative terms; that is, the word "perfect," which etymologically means "complete," implies that there is something in our experience which is less "perfect" or "complete." It is not, therefore, an absolute word, because its full import depends on our experience of things, and it may

thus be applied to-day to something which to-morrow's experience may rank among the "imperfect" or "incomplete." Thus, to take a word which plays a considerable part in Christian Science, "pain." Indeed, we may take it from Mrs. Eddy's writings that the chief object of Christian Science is to get rid of it, and of disease of which it is the symptom. Christian Science rests its appeal to the world on its being an agency of healing—something far excelling in efficiency all the means of combating disease brought before the world at the recent International Medical Congress. It strikes at pain as if it were the greatest evil to be overcome, for this is a decided "imperfection" according to the Christian Scientist healer. But a little more knowledge than what the average "healer" has at his disposal would show that, on the whole, it is beneficent and not an imperfection. For all "pain" is ultimately nerve irritation, and nerve irritation, physiologists tell us, is at the base of all human activity. No Christian Scientist could breathe if the nerves that control respiration were not irritated by the accumulation of venous blood in the circulation. Let any one try to hold in his breath for a minute, and he will experience what the irritation is which arises from a deficiency of oxygen in the blood. This irritation of the nerves controlling respiration is a stage of pain, and without that irritation being continuously repeated we should cease to breathe at all, and therefore cease to live. And, as has been said, all human



activity is stirred up by nerve irritation, so that every human act has a stage of pain at its back. Pain, moreover, when it becomes more intense, is nature's beneficent way of calling attention to something that has gone wrong, and needs the "healer's" aid. "Pain" is thus what an eminent physician calls "that kind guardian of health." Pain has, of course, a deeper significance. It is punitive, and, in this sense, also remedial. It would require, however, a larger than human experience to define its functions in full. We know enough, however, to be certain that the import of the terms we use depends upon our knowledge. Now, to be able to call the world of sense "imperfect" or "not good," we must know a great deal more than comes within the experience of the Christian Scientist or, indeed, of any man. And to assume that a world in which there should be no "pain," or "suffering," or "death," would be "perfect" in comparison with that which we inhabit, is not only beyond our power, but flies in the face of a full knowledge of the beneficent character of these factors in our experience. Death, the greatest of these so-called "imperfections," comes as a beneficent anodyne to give rest after years of weary labour. And if this "imperfection" were not an unavoidable thing in the "material world," that world in a few hundreds or thousands of years would not have standing room for its inhabitants. Now, to take ideas of "perfect" and "good" from an erroneous conception of the material world, and

to apply these to the Almighty, is an instance of unparalleled audacity. The words "perfect" and "good," with the narrow import attached to them by Christian Scientists—excluding from their meaning anything that seems "imperfect" in the material world—cannot be rightly applied to the Almighty. They are terms of purely human signification—with human limitations. We cannot predicate such human terms of God without the assumption of omniscience. But this is exactly what the Christian Scientists do. And having applied them, they proceed to deduce from the words applied—with their limited sense attached to them—the astounding conclusion that God did not make anything which the Christian Scientists call "imperfect"—that is, the material world from which alone they could gain any ideas of "perfect" or "imperfect." Nay, more; the material world cannot, owing to the "imperfections" which *they* find in it, come into the consciousness of Him to Whom they apply the term "perfect," in the limited sense they attach to it. The "spiritual perception" by which they think they apprehend "reality" cannot import into the terms "perfect" and "imperfect" other meanings than those which the Christian Scientists have gathered from that "false consciousness" which deals with purely human affairs. A more glaring instance than this of an argument in a circle could hardly be found anywhere.

Mrs. Eddy presses home very forcibly in her writings how completely and continuously our

physical senses deceive us. The writer of the *Plea for Unbiased Inquiry*, referring to this, gives instances. It is important to take note of this, for the untrustworthy character of our senses is the reason why Mrs. Eddy regards them as constituting "mortal mind," or the "false consciousness that alone manifests and expresses evil."

"For instance," says the writer of the book mentioned, "our physical senses tell us that the sun travels round the earth, and that it rises in the east and sets in the west: that the earth is flat: that two parallel railway lines come closer to each other, and eventually meet; and many other things that are absolutely untrue. Yet, although we know as a fact that they are untrue, our physical senses so continually tell us they are true that we frequently talk as though they were." He then goes on to say, "Christian Science teaches us that we are constantly and continually accepting the false evidence of our physical senses, and that the troubles of the world, and our ignorance of real causes, are in the main due to this false evidence. In no case would this appear to be more true than when our physical senses tell us that we are human beings, having a knowledge of good and evil. Nothing would appear to the physical senses and to the human consciousness more certain than this apparent fact, but the philosophy of Christian Science teaches us that this is essentially untrue. . . . We are not human beings, knowing good and evil, but we are perfect

spiritual beings, knowing and expressing only good, and it is the false human consciousness that alone manifests and expresses evil" (*op. cit.* p. 29).

But do our physical senses really deceive us? We perceive the movement of the sun in the heavens from east to west. That is an undoubted fact of *perception*. The *explanation* of what we see is not a matter of physical sense at all; it is a matter of *reasoning* on what we see. The perception is quite correct, but the *cause* of the perception lies outside the domain of the physical senses. So it is not *sight* that deceives us, for the explanation of the phenomenon is not, and cannot be, given by it, but only by the reasoning faculty, which, although it belongs to that "false consciousness," rightly elucidates it.

Do the physical senses tell us that the earth is flat? If they did they must be able to take in the whole globe at a glance. They take in but a very minute portion, and that, too, merely as an extended surface. The question of flatness does not come in as a testimony of sight. The "earth-flatteners" make irrational inferences from what the senses correctly tell them, but correct reasoning in the sphere of "false consciousness" gives us the fact of the rotundity of the earth. Again, in regard to the perspective of two parallel railway lines coming closer and closer together, that is an undoubted presentation of sight. And if sight did *not* give us this testimony it would mislead us, but

it does give it, and the reasoning faculty in the sphere of the "false consciousness" draws from the testimony the all-important laws of perspective, without the guidance of which laws we should fall into perpetual blunderings.

Do our physical senses tell us that "we are human beings, knowing good and evil." They testify truly that we are human beings, and not dogs or elephants, but how do they perceive that human beings know good and evil. That is not a matter of the physical senses at all, but of the "false consciousness" of the Christian Scientist, which has to be corrected, according to the Christian Scientist, by something which is neither reason nor rational.

The syllogism, "No evil can enter into perfect consciousness; man's consciousness is perfect, therefore no evil can enter man's consciousness," is a marvellous logical method for disposing of "evil." If syllogisms such as this could have reformed the world, it would have been "perfect" long ago. Christian Science is full of these neat arguments, which seem to exclude all questioning.

"The vital point on which Christian Science teaching," says the writer quoted above, "differs from all other philosophy and religious teaching, viz. that God is not, and cannot be, conscious of evil, or of the material world as we know it, for in order to be so He would need to possess the imperfect human consciousness to present to Him wrongly His own perfect Spiritual Creation." This



limitation of the Almighty—"He is not and *cannot* be conscious, etc."—seems tantamount to a claim to omniscience, but it may be merely an adaptation of thoughts appropriated from other people.

Mrs. Eddy's views on this point had been anticipated by Plotinus the Neoplatonist. The better soul, which he called an image of Intelligence, has, according to him, no emotions, no consciousness, of the world below, no senses and no faculty that requires sense as the correlative of its exercise. Plotinus, moreover, would not allow evil to be in any way connected with God. So Christian Science in this as in many other respects does *not* "differ from *all* other philosophy and religious teaching."

To sum up Mrs. Eddy's "Philosophy."

"Nothing possesses reality or existence except God."

"God is All in All."

"God is good. God is mind." "All is mind."

"God, spirit, being all, nothing is matter."

"Divine Science, moving above physical theories, resolves *things* into *thoughts*, and replaces the objects of material sense with spiritual ideas."

"Matter is the falsity, not the fact of existence."

"Knowledge gained from matter, and through the five senses, is only temporal—the conception of mortal mind, the offspring of sense, not of soul, spirit—and symbolises all that is evil and perishable. *Natural Science*, as it is commonly called,

is not really natural or scientific, because it is deduced from the evidence of the physical senses."

"The so-called laws of matter are nothing but false beliefs in the presence of intelligence and life, where Mind is not. This is the procuring cause of all sin and disease."

"To be on communicable terms with spirit persons must be free from organic bodies."

"The only evidence we have of sin, sickness, or death is furnished by the Five Personal Senses: but how can we rely on their testimonies when the senses afford no evidence of truth."

"The so-called material man and these personal senses, with all their evidences of sin, disease, and death, are but a disease."

"Life is divine mind. Life is not limited. If life ever had a beginning it would also have an ending. Death and finiteness are unknown to life."

"Man is spiritual and perfect. Man is incapable of sin, sickness, and death, inasmuch as he derives his essence from God, and possesses not a single original or underived power."

"God without man would be a nonentity."

"Sin, sickness, and death are comprised in human material belief, and belong not to the divine Mind. They are *without a real origin or existence*.

. . If sin were understood as nothingness, it would disappear. The less said or thought of sin, sickness, or death, the better for mankind morally and physically."

"Evil has no reality."

These statements are taken verbatim from the Suras of Mrs. Eddy's new Koran. They are not taken out of their logical context, and may, therefore, be rightly considered as not distorting the meaning which Mrs. Eddy had in her mind. What that meaning was cannot, however, be easily gathered, owing to the mutually destructive propositions which the statements contain. It seems clear, however, that Mrs. Eddy had two worlds before her mind, a spiritual and a material. The spiritual world to her is the only reality. The material, including the physical nature of man, does not proceed from God, for if it did it would be perfect, and this it is not. It is outside God's consciousness, for God, Spirit, cannot, on Mrs. Eddy's showing, be associated with "matter," which is "nothing" because it is not "spirit." And because the material world, including man's physical nature, is outside spirit and thus not created by God, it must have, as Mrs. Eddy says of sin, sickness, and death, no real origin or existence; that is, as seems clear, it must have made itself. This is a form of dualism savouring of the Manichæan heresy: God, spirit, on the one side, and matter, evil, on the other; but Mrs. Eddy will have no mingling of the one with the other. They stand to each other as light and darkness. When the light is present the darkness vanishes.

This absolute exclusion of the world of mortal mind—that is, the material world and physical

man—from any contact with God's Spirit and the Spiritual Creation raises serious difficulties.

If God, Spirit, communicates with man, who is also spirit only, *i.e.* by spiritual means alone, how can His messages reach mankind otherwise than by "spiritual perception."

How can Mrs. Eddy's "Divine Science"—which she understands to be the promised Comforter (section 16)—make use of material means for its propagation? The vibration of the air which occasions sound, and is necessary for oral teaching, is material. The book *Science and Health* is material, made up of material paper, printer's ink, and cloth binding. The 12s. 6d. asked for the cheapest edition of it is also material, whether expressed in dollars or shillings. Mrs. Eddy as spirit, divested of the five senses, would be much more perfect than Mrs. Eddy burthened with "mortal mind," but then we know of no means by which Christian Science could have been given to the world except through "mortal mind." She has had to employ one or other of the five senses, and a strong financial sense besides, to reach the thousands of people whom she is supposed to influence to-day. And if it were not for these things which she calls "nothing"—sickness, disease, and death—she would have no adherents at all. No orthodox doctors would be then needed, and no "treatment" by unlettered healers. Even *Science and Health* would have nobody to appeal to.

But if "sickness" is "nothing," is "health,"

which has many degrees, anything more? It is a condition of the material body, and how could it be produced by ignoring the existence of other conditions of the material body—sickness and disease? Both health and disease alike are, as material affections, outside the orbit, and thus beyond the influence, of the Spiritual Creation.

Mrs. Eddy interpreted the Bible by her divine Science. Some of her theological conclusions by the help of this guidance are furnished in *Science and Health*.

Of the Blessed Trinity she says, "The theory of three Persons in one God suggests polytheism, rather than the one ever-present I AM."

In regard to the Word mentioned by St. John, she says, "The true Logos is demonstrably Christian Science." Mrs. Eddy did not suffer from modesty in making claims for a supernatural element in her teaching, but that the farrago called Christian Science should be identified with Him Who made all things, transcends any instance of audacity recorded in history.

Of the Incarnation she writes, "Jesus was the offspring of Mary's self-conscious communion with God. The Bethlehem Babe was the nearest approximation, since the record in Genesis, to the science of Being, in which spirit makes man." Owing to "material belief entering in part Mary's spiritual conception of Jesus," He had to endure the struggles in Gethsemane. The lack of "entire science in the advent of Jesus produced its own



discord, and met its fate in death." "Jesus was not God's Son in any other sense than every man is God's Son. Had wisdom characterised all the sayings of Jesus He would not have prophesied His own death and thereby hastened or caused it!" "The name Jesus Christ indicates a dual personality." Here she identifies her teaching with an ancient heresy condemned over and over again by the Church.

As to our Lord's disciples she says, "Jesus sent forth seventy students at one time, but only eleven left a desirable record." Mrs. Eddy's disciples need "no intellectual proficiency," "but sound morals are most desirable." As to Prayer she says, "The 'divine ear' is not an auditorial nerve," whatever that may mean. "The danger," she adds, "from audible prayer is, that it may lead us into temptation. Lips must be mute and materialism silent."

She does not seemingly believe in a Personal God, for she says, "Clothing Deity with personality we limit the action of God to the finite senses."

As to the Lord's Prayer, she says, "Only as we rise above all material consciousness and sin can we reach the heaven-born aspiration and spiritual consciousness which is indicated in the Lord's Prayer, *and instantaneously* heals the sick." Then she gives a travesty of the Lord's Prayer, which would be regarded in a sane person as rank blasphemy.

Speaking of the Blessed Sacrament Mrs. Eddy says "the true sense is spiritually lost if the sacrament is confined to the use of bread and wine—this supper closed for ever Jesus' ritualism, or concessions to matter!"

Christ, according to Mrs. Eddy, did not die: "Jesus was merely fainting," she says, "when pitying friends took Him down from the cross. The lonely precincts of the tomb gave Jesus a refuge from His foes" (*Faith and Works of Christian Science*, by Stephen Paget, London, 1909, p. 41). There was consequently no Resurrection of our Lord.

The Second Coming is thus described by Mrs. Eddy. "The Second Appearing of Jesus is unquestionably the spiritual advent of the advancing idea of God as in Christian Science." As to the coming of the Holy Ghost Mrs. Eddy asserts "That influx of Divine Science which so illuminated the Pentecostal day is now repeating its ancient history," and she goes on to say that the promised Comforter is now represented by her revelation, Divine Science—"This Comforter," she says, "I understand to be Divine Science."

The place for herself in this new creed is shadowed forth by Mrs. Eddy in the following words: "No person can compass or fulfil the individual mission of Jesus of Nazareth. No person can take the place of the author of *Science and Health*, the discoverer and founder of Christian Science. No one else can drain the cup which I have drunk to

the dregs as the discoverer and teacher of Christian Science." And as she makes "the advancing idea of God in Christian Science" to be unquestionably "the Second Appearing of Jesus," her position is clearly that of an instrument by which that Appearing is to be brought about! "I should blush," she says, "to write of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* as I have, were it of human origin, and I, apart from God, its author. But I was only a scribe echoing the harmonies of heaven in divine metaphysics." The light of revelation which she received seemed, she says, to have a strange coincidence or relationship with solar light. For, she adds, "I could not write those notes after sunset."

Enough has been extracted from Mrs. Eddy's writings to show that, whatever it is, it is not Christian, and also abundant proof that it is not Science in the dictionary sense of the word. How then, we may well ask, did this farrago of unchristian unscience come to be propagated. Johanna Southcote had followers, we learn, still living in our own time, and the teaching of Joseph Smith is still accepted by the Mormon community. The race of the credulous will never become extinct, and the tribe of those who fatten and batten upon credulity are never lacking. Some one in that land of financial exploitations had seen in Mrs. Eddy's Christian Science at an early date that "there was money in it." Each of her three husbands seemed to

have realised this, but none of them had the financial ability of Mrs. Eddy. The last ought to have had some vocation in this way for "he had been a sewing-machine agent." He became a pedlar of her book, but he died, too soon, perhaps, to fulfil Mrs. Eddy's expectations. A *post mortem* examination showed that he died of an extreme valvular disease of the heart. The physician is alleged (see Mr. Paget's book already cited, p. 74) to have shown Mrs. Eddy the heart, and yet she still insisted that her husband had died of "malicious mesmerism" or "arsenical poisoning mentally administered." The circulation of the book—containing in its present shape 214,000 words—began to grow, and as the cheapest edition was sold at 12s. 6d., while the cost of production could not have been more than one-twelfth of this sum, there was a fine margin of profit. Every neophyte was pledged, moreover, to circulate it, and interesting advertisements were used to impress the public of its value, not only for the restoration of human health, but even for curing the diseases of pet animals. *The Christian Science Journal* was one of the vehicles used for these encouraging advertisements. In the number for Sept., 1897, it is stated "a white Pekin duck, unable to take a step, was given two treatments, when it was cured." Another cure, which was quoted in the *Daily Telegraph* of August 31, 1907, is related "of a little girl who read *Science and Health* to a lame sparrow till it flew away," and

Mr. Lyman Powell records, as stated by Mr. Paget (*op. cit.*), a story of the treatment of a wilted india-rubber plant.

It was, however, in advertising *human* cures that the appeal for new clients was most eminently successful. There is hardly a malady of which a cure has not been advertised in the *Christian Science Journal*. And it is in this advertising of the miraculous cures of human diseases by *Christian Science* that the propaganda is still chiefly maintained.

It is "wrong thinking," as the author of a *Plea for Unbiased Investigation* says, and not microbes or other imaginary causes, that produce disease. Therefore, all that is required to cure disease is to set up in the patient's mind "right thinking"; and the entire "treatment" of Christian Science practitioners is to induce in the patient right thoughts, that is, the thoughts given to the world in *Science and Health* by Mrs. Eddy. "The hosts of Æsculapeus," she says, "are flooding the world with disease." The recent meeting of the International Medical Congress, representing these hosts, must, to the Christian Scientist, seem a band of assassins. Ah! if they could only realise, the Christian Scientist might exclaim, the evil they are causing by the exercise of their "mortal minds" upon the cure of disease, and by investigating its material causes, they would at once relinquish their profession and follow the Divine Science of Mrs. Eddy.

The wonderful record of the results of that



meeting must be very disheartening to the Christian Science practitioner, putting off, as it does, the millenium which they are trying to bring about. Still there are other inducements which prevent the Christian Scientist practitioner from giving up in despair the work of converting the world. The thing pays, and it pays like any other nostrum, because it is "boomed." The testimonials in newspaper advertisements of cures effected by this or that patent medicine sink into insignificance before the array of cures continuously announced in the *Christian Science Journal*, the *Christian Science Sentinel*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, etc., not to speak of "nearly 5000 testimonies given every week in the Christian Science Churches."\* The effect on poor credulous sufferers of the announcement of these cures must be great, and the consequent inflow of dollars for the cause, a subject of much satisfaction. The cures advertised are not in the main of alleged *serious* diseases, and they do not include many that would come under the head of surgery. Indeed, Mrs. Eddy seems inclined to leave the cure of the latter to "mortal mind." "Until the advancing age," she says, "admits the efficacy of mind it is better to leave surgery and the adjustment of broken bones and dislocations to the fingers of the surgeon." That is a pity. For if "wrong thinking" were the cause, say, of a leg

\* *Plea for Unbiased Investigation of Christian Science*, p. 121.

being blown off by a shell, right thinking surely ought to be efficacious in restoring it. Still, perhaps, Mrs. Eddy was right, at least for the present, in leaving such matters to the surgeon.

Mr. Stephen Paget\* has put together two hundred consecutive testimonies of healing from the weekly journal, the *Christian Science Sentinel*, April to August, 1908. Mr. Paget has also annotated these cases.

Some of these cures are wonderful reading—and one is inclined to despair of education if such things can be really believed. The Bill dealing with the feeble-minded cannot be passed too soon. Here is one testimonial: "Mrs. W. testifies that her child, six years old, had several attacks of trouble with his neck, she read *Science and Health* to him, and in less than ten minutes he said, 'My neck is all right now.'" Coupling this case with that of the maimed sparrow to which the little girl read *Science and Health* and cured it, is it any wonder that the circulation of this book amounts to over 400 editions? As each edition of this talisman probably consisted of 1000 copies at least, and as the cheapest edition sells at 12s. 6d. the funds of *Christian Science* must have increased from this source alone by something approaching a quarter of a million pounds!

But powerful as are the remedial properties of the mere reading of the book, the *Christian Science*

\* *Faith and Works of Christian Science*, London, 1909, pp. 119 et seq.

practitioner resorts to "treatment," and that too in a large number of instances "at a distance." Doctors have now to use motor cars, the Christian Science practitioner has thus a decided advantage over him. There are also, in some cases, cures effected by Christian Science which the orthodox physician might hesitate to attempt. Such was that of Mrs. O., who "for ten years studied 'mysticism, occultism, and vedastic (? vedantic) philosophy,' and at the end of this time she felt 'confused, restless, impatient, irritable, and nervous.' Healed." The only wonder in this case is that Mrs. O. had sufficient intelligence left, after these exhausting studies, to believe in Christian Science. Perhaps her weakened mind was a necessary antecedent to accepting the teaching.

The people who give these testimonials constitute a mysterious class. Most of them are women. It would be interesting to ascertain their antecedents. Feeble-mindedness seems evident in many cases. The latest was the poor man who was under a charge of manslaughter owing to the death of his child, whose cure he had entrusted to the Christian Science healers. All he could plead on behalf of his trust was that "God is good." He was mercifully acquitted.

Such cases when they come before the Law Courts let in considerable light on the methods of Christian Science. At the back of it there seem to be sagacious financial controllers, who may be self-deceived in their beliefs as to the value of

Christian Science, but there seems no self-deception in their case in exploiting it financially. There have been, and will perhaps always be, hallucinations of the human mind, but this wild incoherent conception of Mrs. Eddy seems to excel others in fatuity.

## THE CULT OF THE SUPERMAN, OR A REVOLUTION IN ETHICS

DISCUSSION has been confined in the previous sections to certain modern forms of religion which come into conflict with traditional Christianity. Here we have to deal with a system which excludes Christianity altogether, and is largely taken up with the denial of validity to its claims, and with the denunciation of its ethics. It substitutes the cult of Superman for the worship of God, and for the heaven of the Christian, a future paradise here on earth, which will at length be reached by purely human means. It would, then, appear at first sight to be beyond the scope of this volume. Nietzsche's system, however, although largely made up of negatives, has a certain constructive character. He aims at establishing a new cult, which is to replace all the religious ideals and ethical systems of the age.

It is a mighty venture, and one would naturally like to know something of the man who was bold enough to undertake it. A short biography of Nietzsche will not, therefore, be out of place here.

Friedrich Nietzsche was born in the village of Röcken, in the Prussian Province of Saxony, in



the year 1844. His father was the pastor of the place, and his grandfather and great grandfather had also been pastors. Some indication of the source of his future mental instability may, perhaps, be traced to a family strain, for his father lost his reason, dying shortly afterwards, when his son Friedrich was some six years old. The widow removed, thereupon, to the neighbouring town of Naumburg, where Nietzsche, a few years later, entered the Grammar School. At the age of fourteen he removed thence to the somewhat celebrated Public School of Pforta. Here he showed some brilliancy in classics, but, as his leaving certificate indicates, he was weak in mathematics.

From Pforta, he proceeded, in 1864, to the University of Bonn, and, a little later, to that of Leipsic. Professor Ritschl was among his teachers there and took much interest in the youth, implanting in him an ardent love for Greek culture. "Without Ritschl," says one of Nietzsche's biographers,\* "the sudden meteor-like official career of Nietzsche would never have been possible."

At Leipsic he became fascinated with the writings of Schopenhaur, whose influence he displays in all his books. *The World as Will and Idea* revolutionised Nietzsche's outlook on life, and completed his renunciation of Christianity.

In 1869 he was elected to the chair of Classical Philology at the University of Bale. It was here, in the same year, he encountered Wagner, of whom

\* *Friedrich Nietzsche*, by M. A. Mügge. London, Jacks.

he wrote to a friend in August, "I have found a man who personifies to me as no one else does that which Schopenhaur calls 'genius,' and who is entirely pervaded with that wonderful heart-stirring philosophy. Such an absolute idealism prevails in him, such a deep and stirring humanism, such a lofty seriousness of life that in his neighbourhood I feel as near something divine."\* And Mr. Mügge adds, Nietzsche called Wagner, in 1888, a "clever rattlesnake, a typical decadent." This is but one instance of the capricious changes in his friendships. Naturally a hero-worshipper, he lost, in the isolating process of his thinking, all his early ideals, his works becoming more and more charged with strongly worded denunciations of all modern men and things.

His first book, for which he could not at first find a publisher, and which fell quite flat on its publication, appeared in 1871, under the title of *Birth of Tragedy*. It was a homage, as Mr. Mügge says, paid to Wagner. Here he seems to escape for a moment from the pessimism of Schopenhaur, and finds in art that which reconciles him to the world. "Art," as Mr. Mügge quotes, "supplies man with the necessary veil of illusion which is required for action. For the true knowledge as to the awfulness and absurdity of existence kills action."

His health broke down in 1875, and in the following year he was invited to Bayreuth by

\* *Ibid.* pp. 17, 18.

Wagner. Everything at Bayreuth seemed to jar upon him, and he left the place disenchanted with art and metaphysics. He wrote several books in the intervals between his phases of ill-health, couching his teaching in the garb of aphorisms, which at this time was his favourite vehicle for giving his thoughts to the world. The first volume of *Human, All-too-Human* appeared in 1878 and the remainder in 1880. A Socratic influence is strongly manifested in the aphoristic sayings of this work.

*The Dawn of Day*, published in 1881, showed a further development. "It is only," he says here, "from the science of physiology and medicine that we can borrow the foundation stones of new ideals." To which quotation Mr. Mügge pertinently adds, "Here Nietzsche has become a pioneer of Eugenics."

At this time he began to be seriously interested in the subject of "Eternal Recurrence." Everything happens in recurring cycles, and there is no goal. He worked this out later, and although it seemed to exclude all definite progress, he clung to this explanation of the phenomena of the universe to the last, and regarded his elaboration of the view as a new discovery. He seemed not to be troubled with the mechanical difficulty in making the universe a reversible machine.

In the midst of his gloomy views of recurring cycles without issue he gave to the world in 1882 a bright book called *The Joyful Wisdom* which,

in the way of reaction, overflows with joy. His great work, *Thus spake Zarathustra*, appeared in the same year. Here he begins to see an inspiring goal, and makes the sage the mouthpiece of the new philosophy he offers to the world. The blind, hopeless recurring cycles of monotony, while they still colour his thought, are at the same time issuing in a goal—a goal that can be reached in the future—the Superman. “I teach you the Superman. The Superman shall be the meaning of the book.” Buoyed up by this, to him, inspiring ideal, he looked for an immediate appreciation—but the book fell quite flat.

*Beyond Good and Evil*, which was to be a prelude to the *Philosophy of the Future*, was published in 1886, at his own expense, for he could not get a publisher to undertake it.

His *magnum opus*, which was to be called *The Will to Power*, never took a final shape. The notes he had collected for it fill two volumes of 800 pages in the English edition.

It was to substitute, as Mr. Mügge puts it, “*The Will to Power* for the *Struggle for Existence*; to fight Socialism (which Nietzsche calls ‘The tyranny of the meanest and most brainless’); to refute Christianity; to attack the English philosophers—‘that blockhead John Stuart Mill,’ and ‘Herbert Spencer’s tea-grocer’s philosophy,’ and to prepare the way for the Superman.” The first part, to which he gave the chapter-heading, *The Anti-Christ*, was put into shape in 1888. In

January of the next year his brain gave way: he went mad, and never recovered, his death taking place at Weimar in August, 1900.

The spirit of abnormal self-assertion, which alienists tell us is a premonitory symptom of insanity, dogged him throughout his sane years, and persisted even in the hallucinations of his madness. "I am God," which he repeated at times, was among the illusions of his last years.

This short summary of Nietzsche's life throws a sidelight on the origin and drift of his philosophy, which is now to be examined. This examination will follow the chronological development of his thoughts.

"While a boy of thirteen," Nietzsche writes,\* "the problem of the origin of evil haunted me. . . . As regards my solution of the problem, well, I gave, as is but fair, God the honour, and made Him Father of Evil. A little historical and philosophical schooling . . . changed my problem in a very short time into that other one: in what circumstances and conditions did man invent the valuations of good and evil?"

"Good" and "evil," to the ordinary person, seem to be fixed values, not to be questioned. Nietzsche put aside all current views, and started quite independently on the solution of the question. The terms "good" and "evil," he tells us, are merely a means to the acquisition of power.

"Zarathustra found no greater power on earth

\* Introduction to *The Genealogy of Morals*.



than good and evil." "No people could live without first valuing: if a people will maintain itself, however, it must not value as its neighbour values." \*

Good and evil have not, therefore, fixed and permanent values. He found the base of his view, that they are relative and shifting terms, in the Greek writer Theognis. This author used the words "good" and "bad" as synonymous with "aristocratic" and "plebeian." "Bad" was what was dangerous to the aristocratic power, "good" was what served to maintain it.

The whole question of right and wrong rests, according to Nietzsche, upon *values*. In determining values he eliminates those things which in his opinion have none.

Here are some of the values he eliminates. The gods are dead, therefore there are no sanctions external to this world, no values. The "clumsy solution of things called gods," he dismisses, for, to him, the more important consideration of physiology. It is "upon nutrition, a question upon which the 'salvation of humanity' depends to a greater degree," he concentrates his attention. Here he agrees with Herbert Spencer's dictum, "To be a good animal is the first requisite to success in life." That is a *real* value.

Has the soul or "self" a value? "Body am I entirely," he says, "and nothing more—self, it dwelleth in thy body, it is thy body." So soul is

\* *Zarathustra*, pp. 63, 65.

eliminated from values. Schopenhauer is more or less visible in all that Nietzsche wrote, but Schopenhauer carried his pessimism further, and would consider life itself as of questionable value.

Free will, Nietzsche eliminates, as a figment. "It is," he says, "the extravagant pride of man, this desire for freedom of the will, this desire to bear the entire and ultimate responsibility for one's actions oneself, and to absolve God, the world, ancestors, chance and society therefrom. No one is responsible for the fact that he is constituted as he is." \*

The universe from a moral point of view has no values. It is *unmoral*. "There are," he says, "no moral phenomena, there is merely a moral interpretation of phenomena." Good and bad are terms that have a meaning only in respect of man. There is no goal in the drift of the universe. "If it had a goal that goal would," he says, "have been reached by now. If any sort of unforeseen final state existed, that state also would have been reached. The universe is a monster of energy without beginning or end." As it consists of a definite number of centres of energy it must go through a calculable number of permutations and combinations. "At some time or other every possible combination must once have been realised; not only this, but it must have been realised an infinite number of times: hence, he says, "a circular movement of absolutely identical series is

\* Quoted from Mr. Mügge.

thus demonstrated." Thus the processes of Nature are to Nietzsche merely unprogressive and recurring cycles of events. Any value arising from its consideration in a moral sense is therefore void.

Having thus dismissed God, the soul, the freedom of the will, and any teleological significance in Nature from his considerations, Nietzsche proceeds to the discussion of the genesis of morals. There is for him no *moral sense*. Pleasure and pain are not factors in producing the ideas of good and evil. Herbert Spencer's view as to the genesis of the notions of right and wrong, and of conscience, he rejects in the main. Spencer thought that moral ideas took shape in the evolution of the community life. A state of internecine strife, occasioned by each individual desiring to possess what he longs for, without consideration of others, could not continue. The community would soon disintegrate. There is, therefore, a necessity of concession on the part of the individual to the will of the majority. The will of the individual is restrained from overt action by fear of consequence. Fear and custom, therefore, give origin to the idea of what is permissible and what is forbidden. The tribal will overrides that of the individual, and thus generates a tribunal of right and wrong, a *conscience*.

Nietzsche accepts this in a measure, but substitutes for the will of the whole community that of the strong. The community, thus divided into

the strong and the weak, has a twofold morality, that of the strong and that of the weak. The strong, the "masters," regard and denominate as "good" all that makes for their growth in power, and as "evil" all that is opposed to it. The weak, the helots, naturally regard the "good" of the masters as "bad," and *vice versa*. Both master and man have to come at length to an accommodation in order that they may live together at all. Still the respective moral values remain. There is the master morality and the slave morality. The lion's "good" is still the antelope's "evil," and the antelope's "good" the lion's "evil." The mutual antagonisms are kept under; hypocrisy covers them up. This has its counterpart in the "mimicry" of the animal world. The mimicry of protection, and the assumption of harmlessness in the beast of prey. The wolf wears *sheep's* clothing, and the ass puts on the *lion's* skin.

It is not "the struggle for existence," "the will to live," which has brought this state of things about, according to Nietzsche. It is "the will to power." That is the keystone of Nietzsche's whole fabric. Everything is measured by it, all progress is conditioned by it. "The criterion of truth lies," he says, "in the enhancement of the feeling of power." This passion for power is at the base of all living action. "Wherever I found a living thing," he says, "there found I the will to power." And it is to this passion that Nietzsche looks for the progress of the race, at least

for that of the future leaders of the race. "It is the earthquake which breaketh and upbreaketh all that is rotten and hollow." It must not be impeded, however, by slave morality. It is not to be restrained by any considerations of *pity*. Christian ethics stands in its way and Christian ethics must go. It is the great enemy of progress, it is that which hindereth the coming of the highest, the Superman. Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet—these prohibitions with their extension by Christianity into the sphere of wish—must not be allowed to arrest the progress of the leaders of humanity towards the goal—the Superman, the Anti-Christ!

Christianity was, in Nietzsche's eyes, a plea for degeneracy—degeneracy which is worse than any vice. It is the purveyor of a slave morality. It regards the poor, the sick, the weak, the wretched, the waifs and strays of humanity, as subjects of its special care. It makes pity, compassion, divine. It turns men's eyes away from this world to an idealistic region beyond—*écrasez l'infame*. In Christian values, Nietzsche read nihilism, decadence, degeneration, and death. Christian morality, according to him, favoured the multiplication of the least desirable upon earth, and he condemned it root and branch.

"O my brethren," he says, "with whom lieth the greatest danger to the whole human future? Is it not with the good and the just?"



"Break up, break up, I pray you, the good and the just."

This condemnation of Christianity Nietzsche regarded as his greatest service to mankind. He came, he says, in the nick of time.

"It is time for man to fix his goal." And, although the physical universe offered to him no goal, he invented one. He fixed it in the Superman. "Dead are all Gods!" Nietzsche exclaims, "now we will that Superman live."\* The concept of the Superman involves not only the reversal of all current morality, but a new view as to the meaning of life. Herbert Spencer had defined life as "the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations." Nietzsche's definition is "appropriation, injury, conquest of the strange and weak, suppression, severity, obtrusion of its own forms, incorporation, and, at least, putting it mildly, exploitation."† Christianity assumed from the start that these undesirable things could be overcome; that God was working in the world to effect such a conquest. "God's in His heaven," said Browning, "all's right with the world"—but to Nietzsche all is wrong. He substitutes for Darwin's "struggle for existence" and "natural selection," something similar to what Bergson calls "the creative impulse of life," which makes environment and natural conditions subservient to it. Darwin, Nietzsche contended, had tacitly admitted

\* *Zarathustra*, p. 91.

† *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 226.

the subserviency of environment when he said "there are two factors, namely, the nature of the organism, and the nature of the conditions. The former seems to be much the more important." Bergson believes that in the "creative impulse of life" man is ever transcending himself, producing something greater, but that greater is *not* the monster Superman, of the earth earthy, but a higher spiritual type. Nietzsche will have nothing to do with spiritual values. He has cast metaphysics aside, together with all prevailing values, substituting for them the exaltation of brutal strength and self-assertion.

The Anti-Christ is the ideal. There is something pathetic in the irony of Nietzsche's position. He, the valetudinarian, with a hereditary unbalanced brain, endeavours to set up an idol which reflects nothing of his own physical nature. We admire most in others, it is said, what we lack ourselves. So it was with Nietzsche, and his glaring exaltation of his own importance, the premonitory symptom of mania, gave the lead to his task of astounding the world by his new discovery of the Superman. Vanity means emptiness, and he would make it the main characteristic of his ideal man. One encounters advertisements nowadays, offering to teach young men how to succeed in life. The method is by self-assertion. "Believe in yourself." "You can conquer and win if you have the will." This is the teaching of the charlatan who accumulates dollars by putting the doctrine of Nietzsche

to a practical issue. We have read the humorous account of the encounter between the two self-assertives who had been prepared for the battle of life by the astute advertiser. Greek meeting Greek was nothing in comparison with this conflict, and we may gather from it what the world would be as an arena for the contests, wherein Superman endeavoured to "exploit" his fellow Superman. A war of giants it would be, ending, perhaps, in the melancholy tragedy of the Kilkenny cats.

What was the extent of the field of induction upon which Nietzsche built up his fancy-fabric of Superman, and from which he arrived at his transvaluing of all human ideas of worth? The position, as he found it in Theognis, of the aristocrat and the helot among the Greeks, gave him the note for his elaborate harmonies of life. Everything had to be squared with that view.

The uncertainty of all values but those which contribute to power, this is his first gleaning from inductive experience. There is no moral sense because the value it attaches to actions varies geographically.

But is this conclusion warranted by the facts? He might with equal justice say there is no seeing eye because its objects vary in different parts of the world. The *sense* is different from the *object* of it, and according to Nietzsche's own showing, the sense is not generated by the object. In the words of Darwin, which he approves, the nature of

the organism is more important than the nature of the conditions. *Every one* has the sense of right and wrong. It is part of man's equipment *before* he exercises it. The exercising of it may lead to varying verdicts, but this does not lead to a denial of its existence. It can be educated, and Nietzsche must believe in this, for otherwise, one would like to ask, to what other sense does he appeal, when he presents to humanity for approval his Superman? The universality of the verdicts of this moral sense against which he declaims, furnishes a higher sanction than his "transcended values." Besides from his own belief in "determinism," the development of these values is not *accidental* but the *inevitable* outcome of things. According to "determinism" the *existence* of a thing is its sanction. There is no distinction, according to determinism, between what *is* and what *ought to be*.

It may be retorted that Nietzsche's concept of the Superman has thus its sanction, for *it exists*. But although disease exists it does not mean that it is to be preferred to health. This fancy of Nietzsche's has no higher sanction than the wild dreams of the opium smoker, and has probably as little chance of being adopted by sane men. Abnormal things, it is true, may be produced in the processes of Nature and may become starting-points for fresh developments. The theory of "mutations," in the later forms of the evolutionary hypothesis, implies that individual departures from the norm may become the origins

of new species. Nietzsche may have thus regarded himself as a "mutation," but whence did he get his inspiration to enable him to prophesy the coming of that tremendous mutation Superman? He certainly did not consider that the Superman would be a development of things as they are. An earthquake, a cataclysm, would be required, according to him, to upset and revolutionise human values, before the process of developing Superman could come into operation.

But would a change in human values—the earthquake which was to prepare the way of the Superman—be efficient for the purpose. Changes of views on morals, or on anything, do not touch the factors of *physical* evolution. "The tendency of recent work on genetics," Professor Bateson said at the recent meeting of the International Medical Congress, "is thus more and more to exhibit the definiteness and fixity of the laws of descent. . . . Whatever influences may be brought to bear by hygiene or by education, the ultimate decision rests with the germ cells. Evolutionary change is effected not so much by gradual transformations of masses under ameliorations of detrimental conditions, but in the main by the occurrence of individual and sporadic variations." Now, whatever Nietzsche might be able to do in changing moral views, the production of "individual and sporadic variations" is beyond his powers, and beyond the sphere of his contemplated productions. If he succeeded in reforming human morals after his



standard, he might, or he might not, provide a congenial atmosphere for the new human types which Nature may still have in her womb. It would be more prudent, however, to reserve our judgment on the value of the new morals until the higher type of man appears—for the new morals cannot *produce* him.

In the meantime it is wise to hold fast by what Nietzsche admits to be the *prevailing* values of the age. They *work*, and from a pragmatic point of view that is sanction enough. Would the adoption of Nietzsche's values *work*? Imagine a world in which pity was regarded as a vice, in which hate and injury predominated over love and well-doing, in which war was to be the normal state of things, and "appropriation" the rule! One can realise the result. True, Nietzsche does not expect *every one* to become eventually a Superman. He does not address himself to the democracy, which he holds in profound contempt, and for which, in their despicable conditions, current morality is good enough. It is to the *strong*, who exploit the democracy, he appeals. These are they who, when they reach the goal, will by largesse and noble deeds benefit the herd; but the herd will be always with us, and the superman shall rule them.

He would prevent any cross-breeding by *mésalliances* of the aristocratic class with the insignificant and miserable slave-caste. "Every elevation of the type-man," Nietzsche says, "has hitherto been the work of an aristocratic society, and so it will

always be—a society believing in a long scale of gradations of rank and differences of worth among human beings, and requiring slavery in some form or other.”\* “Elevation of a type by human means” runs up, as Professor Bateson shows, against “recent work on genetics.” The germ cells control the type. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that Nietzsche clung to the Lamarckian hypothesis and rejected Darwinism, except where it fell in with his scheme. The Superman cannot be generated by any moral hygiene. He must be Nature’s product, and not that of the Nietzschean philosophy and ethics.

The question of Eugenics is in the air, and much credit has been given to Nietzsche for his share in emphasising the necessity of considering it in all schemes for social progress. The word “Eugenics,” however, does not occur in the writings of Nietzsche, and it was Sir Francis Galton, and not he, who originated the idea underlying the name. Nietzsche had read in 1884 Sir Francis’s book *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development*, whence he doubtless borrowed the idea. Sir Francis Galton had said that “Eugenics must be introduced into the national conscience like a new religion. It has, indeed, strong claims to become an orthodox religious tenet of the future. I see no impossibility in Eugenics becoming a religious dogma among mankind” (*Inquiries into Human Faculty*). And Dr. Inge, the Dean of St. Paul’s, is also fully

\* *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 223.

convinced of the compatibility of Eugenics with religion as presented in the doctrines of Christianity.

To Nietzsche, as we have seen, the enemy of all progress, on the other hand, is Christianity. He exhausts the vocabulary of vituperation in denouncing it. "I *condemn* Christianity," he says,\* "and confront it with the most terrible accusation that a man has ever had in his mouth. To my mind it is the greatest of all conceivable corruptions. I call Christianity the one great curse, the one enormous and innermost perversion, the one great instinct of revenge, for which no means are too venomous, too underhand, too underground, and too *petty*—I call it the one immortal blemish of mankind." Why does he thus stigmatise it? Because it has pity for the weak and the down-trodden. Because, in his mind, "Christianity is the reverse of the principle of selection." Because it is the advocate of what he calls "slave morality." Anarchism and Socialism, he contends, are the fruits of this Christian morality. Then with regard to the "other-worldism" of Christianity, he says, "The Superman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: the superman *shall* be the meaning of the earth! I conjure you, my brethren, *remain true to the earth*, and believe not those who speak unto you of super-earthly hopes! Poisoners are they, whether they know it or not."† Oh, the irony of it! The secular Socialist—the bugbear

\* Quoted by Mr. Mügge, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, p. 66.

† *Ibid.*, p. 69.

whom Nietzsche despises with all his soul—has obeyed his exhortation in being *true to the earth*, and in discarding *super-earthly hopes*!

But we have to answer *his* charges against Christianity. Does pity, does care of the weak and oppressed, does love of your neighbour, does belief in a spiritual world beyond the grave, militate against the progress of humanity? The answer will depend upon the view we entertain of man. If vigour of body and "will to power" alone constitute the highest human characteristics, then Nietzsche is right. But has any thoughtful analysis of human endowments ever come to this conclusion? "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! . . . In apprehension how like a God!" But Shakespeare, in Nietzsche's eyes, which had no reverence for any existing *human* greatness, was "that marvellous Spanish-Moorish-Saxon synthesis of taste, over whom an ancient Athenian of the circle of Æschylus would have half killed himself with laughter or irritation."

"Is not the life more than the food," said a greater than Shakespeare. Is not the thinking something within man more than the earth, to which Nietzsche charges us "to be true." And has not this thinking self an outlook with a wider horizon than that limited by space and time, an ideal that no Superman, though he had the strength of a prize-fighter and the ruthless thirst for power of a Napoleon, can ever satisfy.

Christ on the cross—naked, bereft of bodily vigour, fainting, forsaken; *there* is the refuge in thought for all who have failed to find anything on earth to satisfy their highest ideals. *There*, lifted up throughout the ages, He draws the best in every man to Him.

*There*, on the other hand, is the Superman—the Anti-Christ—away in the distant and uncertain future, depending for his development on biological principles which have been proved inoperative; and, even if he could be developed by human aids, a monster of ruthlessness and self-assertion—*there* is Nietzsche's ideal for whom you are to sacrifice yourself to-day, sacrifice your love of all else besides. "Thus demandeth," Nietzsche says, "my great love to the *remotest ones*: be not considerate of *thy neighbour*! Man is something that must be surpassed."

Eugenics, it is true, must from even a Christian point of view have a goal, and man surpassing present man must be its aim, and degeneracy of race that which must be avoided. But what obstacle does Christianity present to the realisation of this aim? Is Christian pity a factor in producing degeneracy? Pity, like every good thing, can be abused, and Nietzsche saw its abuses. In his view it made the *weak* the ideal, and thus lowered the standard of values. But does pity do this? It is true that it develops in some minds a form of hysteria manifesting itself in a supersensitiveness to every kind of pain, as if pain were the greatest



evil in the world. We have already pointed out, however, some of the beneficent aspects of pain, and if we had a wider experience we should probably realise more fully the benevolent part it plays in all human affairs. Has it not, moreover, been consecrated for ever by Him Who drank the cup of pain to its very dregs? It is the hysterical shrinking from pain, and *not* pity, that marks degeneracy. Pity is a necessary element in human progress, even in the development proposed by Eugenics? A world without pity would soon come to an end. If a mother's pity were not aroused, would she sacrifice her own comfort for her weak infant? All the world of men and women have been at one time weak and helpless infants, and depending on pity for their weakness, whether they are to be helped to grow up at all. Even the future Superman, with his "will to power," will have, as a powerless infant, to appeal to some one's pity to bring him up.

Is it not owing to pity, too—pity over the lot of the unfortunate in life's race—that recent legislation has endeavoured to improve the hygienic conditions of the people, and to spread knowledge of the laws of Nature—necessities, both of them, to human progress?

Mr. A. M. Ludovici, who is the special pleader in this country for Nietzsche's transcended values, feels a difficulty at Nietzsche's denunciations of pity. He quotes Nietzsche to show that he did not deny absolutely all value to pity. "*A master*

by nature, when such a man has sympathy, well! *that* sympathy has value! But of what account is the sympathy of those who suffer, or of those even who preach sympathy!"\* But sympathy means "suffering *with*" a person, and consequently he who suffers not cannot sympathise. The "*master by nature*" does not suffer.

"Ah, where in the world," says Nietzsche, "have there been greater follies than with the pitiful?" "Myself," he adds, "I would sacrifice to my design, and my neighbour as well—such is the language of creators. All creators, however, are hard."†

"Weakness" with Nietzsche has no double meaning; he denounces it on all occasions. It is "botched" work, and ought to be stamped out. It is Christianity that maintains and perpetuates it. But if there were no weakness could the strong man, on Nietzsche's own hypothesis, win? His coming to the top presupposes, as a necessity, the existence of the weak. Take away the weak, and how could the superman *exploit* humanity? The physically weak, moreover, may be, and often are, mentally strong. Nietzsche himself would not call his own mental qualities weak, and yet physically he was "botched" by ill-health, and by the premonitory symptoms of mania.

Recent investigations of the laws of heredity also

\* *Nietzsche*, by Anthony M. Ludovici: Constable and Co., London, 1912, p. 89. Quotation from *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 257.

† *Zarathustra*, pp. 104, 105.

show, as we have said, that the germ cells, and not external influences, determine the future of the race. It has been shown even that drunken parents, "botched" humanity, may have normally healthy children. The weak find a place, in fact, in Nature's plan. They are set over against the strong as a foil. It is only by comparison that we know the better from the worse—it is only by realising the nature of the worse that we can attain the better. Eugenics would have no meaning if there were nothing that needed development. Christianity, the greatest of all developers, sees the good in every one, sees it, and aims at promoting its further growth—not at sweeping the weak off the face of the earth. It is this principle in Christianity that gives it a hold upon humanity. "All creators are hard," says Nietzsche, "and their rule severe." The yoke of Christ, on the contrary, is easy. And yet Christ, the meek, is more severe than Nietzsche's superman upon all that mars real human progress—upon aims lower than the highest, upon moral cowardice, upon hypocrisy, upon injustice. The cardinal moral virtues, prudence (or foresight), justice, fortitude, temperance, have been consecrated by Christian teaching from its origin. Are these *slave* values, and calculated to promote a slave race? Are the three intellectual virtues—always upheld by the Church—wisdom, knowledge, intelligence, opposed to high ideals? Are the seven capital sins, pride, covetousness, envy, gluttony, lust, anger, and sloth, conducive to producing a higher type of humanity?

Nietzsche includes, it is true, self-assertion and "appropriation," among his superman's *virtues*, and would approve of some of the other capital sins on occasions; but human nature—not a slave morality—is against him. Would it be better for humanity if the prohibitions in the six commandments that bear upon duty to our neighbour were removed? Murder and theft, covetousness and lying could have no sanction in any society that means to maintain itself. They might help in the development of the Superman, according to Nietzsche; but what society would give free play to such factors in hope of the development of a higher type of humanity?

A careful student of Nietzsche will no doubt find that he points out many real abuses, many obstacles to true progress, and from this point of view his criticisms on the existing state of things, and his consequent contributions to progress, are valuable. It will be clear, however, at the same time, that his views on humanity in general, and on the Christian religion in particular, are all distorted by his extravagantly self-assertive outlook. He has seen Christianity in a caricature of the real thing. An hysterical sensitiveness to pain, as evinced in the vivisection controversy, a morbid compassion, of which the undesirable is the object, as shown in the opposition to hygienic restrictions, a weakness of will, displayed in the love of ease and of freedom from danger, these are singled out by Nietzsche for his scathing denunciation. But these

are not Christian. Christianity is something more robust than the pale, anæmic thing he would make it. It has within it a divine incentive, driving it to war to the death against all evil—all that stunts the growth of true humanity. That incentive has made it powerful in the past to overthrow the mightiest of mighty monarchies, which were the real enslavers of the world. In the future, if the self-asserting Superman—who, like Milton's Satan, exclaims, "Evil, be thou my good"—be ever produced, he also will be obliged to cry out, with one of his prototypes, "O Galilean, Thou hast conquered."



## SECULARISM AND RATIONALISM

SECULARISM is a mode of regarding human affairs which at first sight would seem to be beyond the scope of a work dealing with modern substitutes for traditional religion. Secularism not only does not present itself as a religion at all, but it is a *negation* of all religions. It accepts the two fundamental principles—which in the gospel of Nietzsche's Superman remove every sanction for religious belief—"the gods are dead," and "the aim of human life is to be *true to the earth*" and to discredit all appeals to supermundane values. These foundation principles being accepted, secularism has no base for religion. Still its adherents would regard it all the same to have a claim upon the suffrages of mankind as a counter-ideal to that presented by Christianity. As a substitute for all religious ideals, secularism may, therefore, properly claim a place for treatment here.

Secularism rests on rationalism. A rational interpretation of man's place in nature excludes, it is contended, all beliefs characteristic of what secularists call other-worldism. Science—that is, rationally acquired knowledge—has, from the point of view of the secularist, no room for religion, and

science to him is the sole and sufficient guide for human belief and conduct.

The business of science, roughly, is the study of the phenomena of nature with the view of ameliorating man's lot upon this earth. No sensible person would deny that there is here an all-sufficient scope for scientific investigation. The real benefit of mankind—that is the goal at which it aims, or ought to aim. Its triumphs in this field have been so great that no one is now inclined to dispute its well-considered verdicts on the subjects of its investigations. "Nature" furnishes the wide area for its methodical explorations.

But what is the field embraced under this name of "nature"? A little thought shows that "nature" is not something purely external to man—something of which he is a merely passive spectator; something which would possess all the features we ascribe to it in the absence of the observing mind. It is *man's* outlook on something not himself; man's outlook, conditioned and coloured by his faculties. Nature is not the *simple* thing that the casual thinker considers it. It is a complex whole made up of the object of thought—an object which is transformed in the process of observation—and the thinking subject itself.

Thus the field of scientific study is not an assumed external and independent world, extended in time and space, but the world as presented in human consciousness—as seen by the human observer himself. A science that neglected the

study of human consciousness in order to explore an external world assumed to be independent of that consciousness, would be a false science.

But modern science is not of this nature. It has come to regard the study of mind as a proper subject of scientific investigation, and Psychology is now admitted as a department of science at the meetings of the British Association. The President of that Association has just shown us in his Birmingham Address how far apart modern science is from the "Rationalists'" standpoint.

It is in the sphere of Psychology that religion finds a rational basis. Once we recognise the reality of psychological facts the whole drama of human history assumes a new import. We begin then to see that human experience has been continuously rationalised more and more into harmony with human ideals.

The appearance of a dead chief in the dream of the savage may have borne in upon him the conviction that personality survives death, and may have thus become a first step in the genesis of belief in gods and immortality. His fear lest the dream-survival might still have power to injure him, may naturally have led to efforts to propitiate it. But this process of thinking and acting arose not from the *object* of it, but from the innate aptness of the mind for such impressions. Delusive as the inferences are to us, they were in consonance with the constitution of the human mind of the time, and were steps in a true evolution.

In the fight of early man with his antagonistic environment, terror must frequently have beset him—fears of living foes, fears based on his belief in invisible inimical forces—this perhaps gave origin to his concepts of deities and demons, and to the idea that they might be propitiated. Fear *alone* was not, however, the factor in this step in religious progress—for if this had been the case, it would never have been rationalised into something higher. Fear led to the feeling of need for a helper, a Divine Helper to exorcise his terror, and to save him from the ruthless natural powers of his world. The actual facts of his experience would not, *taken alone*, have led to this religious outlook of the savage. There must have been something within him to which these facts appealed, and which gave to them a bearing. To designate it as a *religious sense* is most in keeping with the experience of its working throughout the ages.

The physical senses limit perception to material things. This “religious sense” was throughout the ages feeling after something beyond them. The events that stirred it into activity did not *create* it. “Fear” did *not* “in the beginning of things create the gods,” but it called this religious faculty into play, and the gods were the answer to its developing vision. Here, as elsewhere, there was evolution. The pantheon that offered aid to man in his fight with antagonistic events became unified by the growing religious sense, and took on at the same time more elevated characteristics. The

psychological principle, this it was which had been elaborating religion all the time, and concurrently becoming developed itself. Once we admit this psychological character of religion, rationalism and secularism have no standing ground.

But a secularist objector may say this psychological principle gives us no criterion whereby one might discriminate between religious presentations, or furnishes no means of knowing whether anything corresponds to the subjective impressions we experience. These presentations may have the one and the same pragmatic characteristic—*they work*, but that does not give validity to them.

This objection is natural. But comparison of things in various stages of growth is not possible, even if we premise that all these stages are on the way to unity. Their relative values depend on the fact that some turn out to be more fitted than others to meet experience. The truest presentation is that which *works best*—it is a case of the survival of the fittest. But it could not work at all if it had not “faith” as the stimulant to activity, and faith itself would evaporate if it were not continually receiving sanctions from the objective order of things. The eye in permanent darkness would cease to function. So if the concept of “God” did not respond to the psychological religious sense, that sense would not function. The fact that the religious instinct, exhibited in a thousand forms, has maintained its existence throughout the ages—and that, too, amid the



disabling influences which would be naturally imposed upon it in a world where material concerns predominate—is a strong proof of its validity. The convergence also of all religious instincts towards unity—towards the concept of a God that meets all subjective demands—is a further evidence of the validity of such instincts in the progressive evolution of humanity. The unity also to which the drift of the religious instinct tends is not a mere pantheistic conception of an all-pervading power. It is a unity constituted by a personal Intelligence, sympathetic with the struggle of lower intelligences towards union with Himself. It is a unity where all the good in humanity finds its source and sanction, and where man has a real refuge from the numbing oppression of a mechanical cosmos.

In Dr. Fraser's *The Golden Bough* there are gathered together, from many lands and different ages, the beliefs and religious practices of almost every human type. The reader of this book might naturally come to the conclusion that all the various religious customs recorded therein had proceeded from some common base, and that this base was the outcome of misapprehension of natural phenomena. Religion in all its forms would thus seem to be the result of *illusion*. The book named seems to have led many to this conclusion. But is there not another aspect in the facts presented? From what has been said above, the consensus of religious beliefs in space

and time points to an ever-present instinct driving man to realise, through phenomena, something beyond. The phenomena are the *occasions* which waken the instinct, and not its *cause*. Has not science itself, in its development, passed through similar illusions before it became "rational." But *reason* was at work here all the time. So the religious instinct also has been at work continuously, as *The Golden Bough* conclusively shows, and to consider the products of its activity as vain illusions, to be relegated to the waste-heaps of history, would not certainly be scientific. The explanation of the workings of the human mind can be successful only when we take *all* mental phenomena into consideration, and deal with the psychological facts as we deal with those presented in the material world.

The spirit, which man finds first in himself, associated with a material decaying body, is felt, as man reaches higher stages of development, to be of the nature of an effluence from the eternal Intelligence—the great spirit uncircumscribed by space or time. The assumption at the base of secularism that there is no higher intelligence than the human, or if there be, that it is not a matter of concern to humanity, implies omniscience, and is unparalleled in audacity. Nature itself would not be intelligible if Intelligence were not at the base of it. Science is only possible because the objective universe is *orderly*, and thus implies an ordering Intelligence controlling it. And science in its investigation

of that orderly nature is also reaching a unity of control, which harmonises with the anticipation of the religious instinct. The cosmic processes, moreover, are not limited to the narrow area of this planet, to which the secularist would confine them. The speck we call the earth depends for its place and existence on the play of extra mundane forces. To limit man's hopes and aspirations by ignoring other than material external agencies could but issue in degeneracy—a degeneracy at once apparent when we contrast this outlook with that of the highest minds.

The secularist and the rationalist rely on science, but it is not on the science of to-day. For the science of to-day is constructive. We have seen how it has given a place to the study of mind in its wide domain. But even in objective nature it is reaching conclusions that are shaking the foundations of the older materialism upon which the secularist builds. Take, for instance, its most recent researches into the nature of "matter," a word which gives all its significance to "materialism." I append here an extract from a paper of mine printed a few years ago, in which I attempted to show the drift of recent science.

"Although science has a ready definition for 'matter' in its conception of 'mass' and 'inertia,' it is beginning to have views about it which seem to suggest that 'mass' itself, and 'shape,' too, are not *ultimate* things. The most recent views about 'matter' are still fluid, so fluid indeed that no

existing physical text-book is quite up to date. These new views have been led up to by various modes of experimenting. For some time back we have been accustomed to see matter, and that, too, in its subtlest gaseous forms, reduced to a temperature never, as far as we know, realised in nature. The oxygen, which is the vitalising element in the atmosphere we breathe, has been cooled down to a temperature at which it becomes liquid and can be poured from one vessel into another. The remarkable thing about it, however, is not this. As the gas loses heat, that is as the average motion of the molecules which compose it becomes more circumscribed and less rapid, the gas itself seems to lose its most active properties. It loses, for instance, its capacity for making chemical compounds, and as it is this capacity of oxygen which makes it able to sustain our life: vital existence, if it could be *otherwise* maintained at this low temperature, would be for this reason alone impossible. The lowest temperature attained in the latest experiments has been some  $3^{\circ}$  C. above the absolute zero, that is some 464 degrees of frost. One distinguished professor at least was of opinion that if we could expose matter to the temperature of the absolute zero, it would possibly have no properties which could affect our senses, that is, it would be *to us* non-existent. This is a theoretical, but possible, view of matter which may affect our belief; but there is another view of matter which has been arrived at only within the last five

or six years, which may bring about a readjustment of our religious conceptions.

“Not many years ago the atom was considered to be the most minute possible portion of matter—indivisible and permanent. It was the *ultima thule* beyond which investigation could not be profitably pursued. It is now known that *the atom is a composite system*, and that the elements which make it are among the most active things in nature—the atom is, in other words, a world in miniature, full of activities. The very active ‘things’ which give the atom being are called electrons, and the point of interest to religiously minded people is this, that we have, in these electrons, according to an investigator of world-wide reputation, the nearest analogy to the concept of a disembodied spirit, that is a charge of electricity pure and simple. And the suggestion, moreover, has been made that electricity—which is not ‘material’ in the ordinary sense—is the only source of *mass*, *inertia*, and *shape* \*—which are assumed to be the *differentiae* of matter. This is still a matter of speculation, but work is going on at a rapid rate in this new field of investigation. Every day brings out something which tends to impress us with the conviction that we are on the eve of some great and simplifying discovery. Even while this paper is in the press, the discovery of a *positive* electron has been announced to the French Academy,†

\* See note, p. 27.

† Prof. Sir J. J. Thompson has dealt quite lately with this point.



and the assumption has been made that electricity is a transition stage between ether and matter.

“A new world is gradually being revealed to us. As the fifteenth century gave us a new continent, and stirred thereby the productiveness of English minds to furnish us with the immortal literature of the spacious age of Elizabeth, so this fresh insight into the arcana of nature cannot but inspire us with still higher ennobling thoughts, and awake in us at the same time more of that wonder, which is the source of all true philosophy, and the mother of new ideals.

“Face to face with this new world of science we shall be disposed to recognise more fully than before that nature and revelation are not in antagonism—not even similar to parallel lines of railway which do not meet—but are lines already in the process of converging towards that point where, at the consummation of things, God will make ‘the pile complete.’”

THE END

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